

al-Muhaddithat:

the women scholars in Islam

MOHAMMAD AKRAM NADWI

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by

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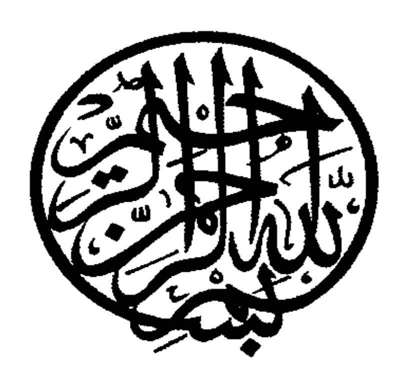
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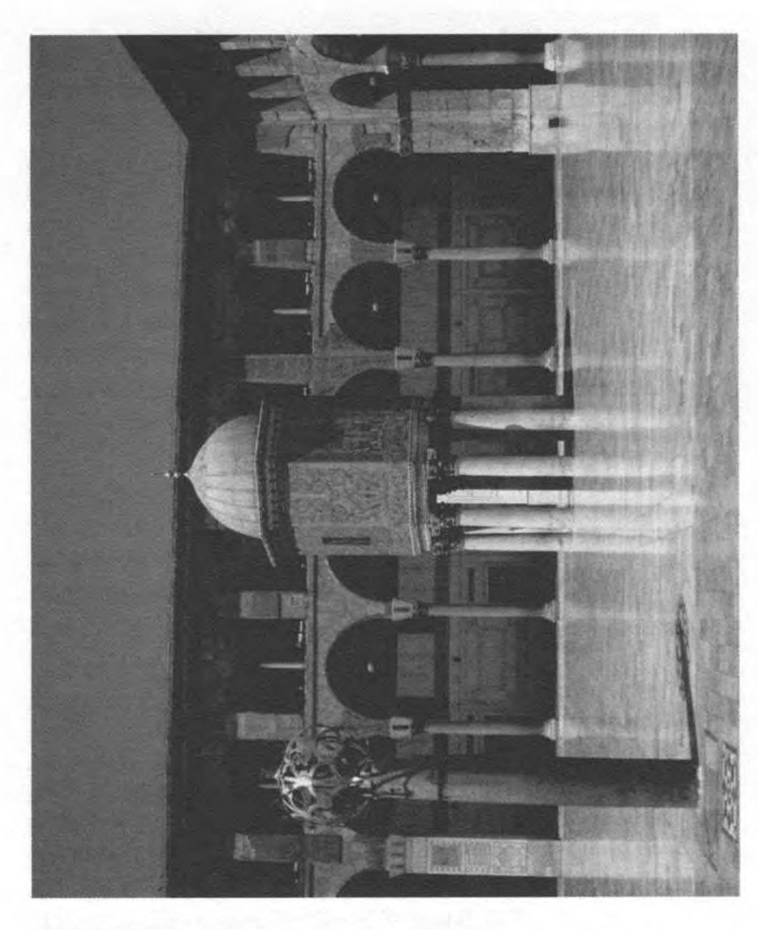
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**Maps* drawn by Dr. Alexander Kent, FBCart.S., FRGS.
Photos from the personal collection of Yahya Michot.
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Qāsim ibn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAlī said: 'We were at the door of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, he came [out] to us. We said: O Abū Naṣr, narrate ḥadīth to us. He said: Do you pay the *zakāh* [that is due] on ḥadīth? I said to him: O Abū Naṣr, is there *zakāh* [that is due] on ḥadīth? He said: Yes. When you hear ḥadīth or remembrance of God you should apply it.'

(see pp. 285–86)



Courtyard of the Great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, where Umm al-Dardāʾ (d. 81) taught ḥadīth and *fiqh*, and ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī (d. 816) was appointed to the post of principal teacher of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. (Photo: Yahya Michot)

Preface

This book was conceived as a translation of the *muqaddimah* to an as yet unpublished biographical dictionary in Arabic of the women scholars of ḥadīth in Islamic history. However, it was soon apparent that much of the original needed to be adapted, not simply translated. One reason is that this introduction to the material in the Dictionary is not accompanied by that work, and so the material in it needs to be adequately illustrated. Another reason is that the expectations of an English readership are somewhat different from an Arabic one. I know that to be so from questions put to me after talks I have given on the subject and from correspondence following announcement of this book. Those expectations oblige me to say what this book is not, which is rather an awkward way of explaining what it is.

Let me start by stating that this is not an exercise in 'women's studies'. I have no specialist knowledge of perspectives associated with that discourse. The admission of ignorance should not be taken as indifference to it. Rather, I hope that people skilled in 'women's studies' will make proper use of the material presented here. That material is, though arranged and organized, a *listing*; it is, by analogy with a word dictionary, much nearer to 'words' than 'sentences', and far from 'paragraphs' linked into an 'essay'. Much work needs doing on the information before anybody ventures to derive from it value-laden arguments about the past (still less, the future) role of women in Islamic society. Among the next tasks are, starting with the easiest:

selection and composition from the material: e.g., there are, in the Dictionary I have compiled, reams of information on at least a score of individual women that could be turned into distinct biographical studies. Of course, much labour is entailed: the little sketch of Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al Khayr given here (pp. 93–96 below) needed looking up half a dozen different books – but at least the Dictionary enables one to know which books to start with.

quantitative analysis: e.g., relative numbers of *muḥaddithāt* in different times and places, and their preferences within the material available for study. The overview in Chapter 9 lays out the main blocks of the big picture but it needs detailing.
historical and contextual background: e.g., how particular genres of ḥadīth compilation developed and were transmitted – some charts provided here (necessarily scaled down) may indicate directions for such focused inquiry; how ḥadīth study was affected by political events, administrative arrangements, relations between state and society, and by social and economic status; how it was documented; how it was funded (informally, or formally in the *waqf* deeds of the great madrasas/colleges).
thematically-oriented reflection: e.g., as their names show, many *muḥaddithāt* were daughters of men bearing the title 'qāḍī', 'imām', 'ḥāfiẓ' (expert, master), etc. It appears that the men most committed to the education of women, to respecting and treating them as peers in scholarship, and in the authority that derived from that status, were (as people now use this label) the most 'conservatively' Islamic – their intellectual genealogy traces to the *Sunnah*; not to (that other long line in Islamic scholarly effort) Aristotle.

My fear is that some readers will not wait for the necessary next phases of work to be undertaken. Vilification of Islam as a misogynist social order is so intense and pervasive that people urgently want assurance that it is not, or was not, or 'need not', be so. Scholarly corrective will not suffice to end that vilification since it is not based upon truth, but upon an aversion to Islam as such, perpetuating itself by seeking, and soon finding, instances of abuse of women (and other negatives like misgovernment, etc.) among Muslim communities. Similar failures in other communities are rarely associated with their religious tradition but explained by local factors. One need only compare the level of attention given in television documentary to the situation of women in Pakistan with that of women of equivalent social class in India to realize that such attention is quite particularly targeted on Muslims. In part this is because in India (to stay with that example) many middle-class younger women are beginning to see, and to project, their bodily presence in styles taken from the West, with some accents from local fashions. By contrast, most of their Muslim peers in Pakistan or India are not

doing the same – like many Muslims elsewhere they are not willing to subordinate manners derived from their religious tradition to Western tastes. The exasperation with Islamic ways for showing no consistent tendency to fade out, combined with the ancient aversion to Islam – it predates the modern European languages in which it is expressed – is the principal reason for the virulence of some feminist critique of it. Muslims, understandably, want their religion defended from that.

The feminist agenda, as understood by this outsider to it, has a practical side and a theoretical side. The former is concerned with questions of justice for women: equality in pay, access to education, employment, political representation, etc. No fair-minded person can argue with that. Justice is a virtue; Muslims have no monopoly either on the definition or practice of virtues. Rather, they are to praise the virtues in whoever has them and, within the boundaries of the lawful, compete therein. It would be hard to improve on the conciseness of this statement on the matter by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 751), greatest of many great students of Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728):[1]

A Shāfiʿī said: 'No politics (*siyāsa*) excepting something that corresponds with the Law (*sharʿ*)!' [...] If in saying 'excepting something that corresponds with the Law (*sharʿ*)' you mean 'which does not run against what the Law has pronounced upon', it is correct. If [on the other hand] you mean [by that] 'No politics except for what the Law has pronounced upon', it is an error [...]. *When the signs (amāra) of justice appear and its face is radiant, by whatever means it may be, there [you find] the Law of God and His religion.* God, Praised is He, is too aware, too wise and too just to restrict the ways of justice, its signs and its marks, to a single thing, to then reject something that may be more evident than those [and] to not judge, when such a thing exists and subsists, that it is obligatory. Through the ways that He has instituted as Law, He has rather, Praised is He, made it plain that what is aimed at by Him is

[1]I here quote (with italics added) the translation by Yahya MICHOT, in his discussion of sundry discourses of Ibn Taymiyyah on *Muslims under non-Muslim Rule* (2006), 105; the passage is from *al-Ṭuruq al-ḥukmiyyah* (ed. S. ʿUmran, Cairo, 1423/2002), 17–18.

that justice be made to rule among His servants and that people strictly practise equity. *Whatever the ways by which justice and equity obtain, they are a part of the religion and do not run against it.*

The aim of undoing injustices suffered by women (wherever they are suffered) is acceptable to Muslims. But it is entangled in the theoretical underpinning of feminist critique, which is not acceptable but which nevertheless invades Muslim minds. I hear it in the form and content of the questions put to me. The form is: if men can do X, why can't women do X? The X could be 'pray in a mosque', 'interpret the law', 'issue fatwas', 'lead prayer', 'travel unaccompanied', 'behave chastely without scarfing the head', etc. This approach succeeds in embarrassing Muslims by framing each issue as one of equity: if men can X and women can't, or if women must X but men needn't, it does appear to be unfair. Now, it is not possible here to deal properly with such questioning of Islam – as I have said plainly, I am not qualified to take on 'women's studies' discourse – but I do owe it to the women whose scholarly authority this book celebrates to say briefly what is necessary to distinguish their perspective. These were not feminists, neither consciously nor unconsciously. They were above all else, like the men scholars, *believers*, and they got and exercised the same authority by virtue of reasoning with the same methods from the same sources as the men, and by having at the same time, just as the men did, a reputation for *taqwā* (wariness of God), righteousness and strong intellect.

My concern is that some readers will misunderstand the resemblance, in form and content, between the questions above and those found in some of the Prophetic ḥadīths cited in this book – the women among the Companions say: men are mentioned in the Book, what about us? men are commanded to do this and that, while we are stuck with the children, what about us? Also, readers will find in the book abundant examples of women teaching ḥadīth classes of men and women students in the principal mosques and colleges (when established, from the sixth century AH on); issuing fatwas; interpreting the Qur'ān; challenging the rulings of qāḍīs; criticizing the rulers; preaching to people to reform their ways – and in all this being approved

and applauded by their peers among the men... The sheer number of examples from different periods and regions will establish that the answer to some of the 'If men can, why can't women?' questions is 'Men can and women can too'. That is correct, and yet it is not right.

It is not right because the approach embedded in the question 'if men can, why can't women?' is, from the Islamic perspective of the *muḥaddithāt*, misleading in itself. It leads astray by three main routes. (1) Except as an amusing irony the question is never put the other way – 'if women can X, why can't men?' Rather, it is taken as given that the traditional domain of women is inferior: running a home, bringing up children are menial chores, unpaid in money or prestige, not a calling. So women should strive to take responsibility in the traditionally male domain of earning a living and competing for economic and political power, and the domain of family life – however important it may be – must be squeezed in somewhere somehow between the public domain commitments of the man and woman. To the extent that a social order moves towards that goal, women are freed of economic dependency, of any need to 'wait upon' men, acting as fathers or husbands (or priests or professors, etc.), telling them what to do.

I have worked through much material over a decade to compile biographical accounts of 8,000 *muḥaddithāt.* Not one of them is reported to have considered the domain of family life inferior, or neglected duties therein, or considered being a woman undesirable or inferior to being a man, *or* considered that, given aptitude and opportunity, she had no duties to the wider society, outside the domain of family life.

(2) The form of the question 'if men can, why can't women?' gives primacy to *agency* as the definitive measure of the value of being human. What counts is what one *can do*, not what one *can be*; moreover, this approach defines agency in terms of challenging an established order of privilege – here, the privileges men have – so that the emotions and attitudes in play are characterized by *resistance*, and success is measured in terms of how many *can-do* items have been *won over* from the exclusive ownership of men. Thus, an argument may be contrived along the lines of: these

extraordinary women, the *muḥaddithāt*, were – perhaps unconsciously – striving from within (i.e. resisting) against an oppressive system, and they achieved as much dignity and liberty of action as the system could tolerate. (The implication is that now we can do better, go further, etc.)

This argument will not hold against the information I have presented. It will become clear from the first three chapters of this book that there is no period when men have certain privileges to speak or think or act, and then women find a way to 'invade' the men's ground. Rather, the women and men both know, *from the outset of Islam*, what their duties are: women are there teaching and interpreting the religion from the time that the duty to do so passed, with the Prophet's death, to the scholars among his Companions. Indeed, by the assessment of some later scholars, the Companion most often referred to for fatwas or *fiqh* was ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. From the Companions it passed to their Successors. Women are prominent among both, and among the later generations, who continued (or revived) that precedent. There is no evidence of any campaign, overt or covert, to win rights from men for women.

Undue emphasis on agency (being able to *do*) as a measure of dignity and liberty is an error of more serious import. In the believers' perspective, the best of what we do is worship and, especially, prayer. Prayer, in its immediate, outward effects in the world seems to do nothing. However, the doer of it (and only the doer) knows how he or she is measured by it – the quality of presence of will, of reflection and repentance, of the courage to stand alone and quite still on the line between fear and hope before God. Prayer builds (and tests) the stability of the qualities that Muslims have treasured most in their scholars, men or women, namely wariness (or 'piety' in relation to God) and righteousness (in relation to other people). It is in the practice and teaching of these qualities that the *muḥaddithāt* were engaged. Their personal authority as teachers was no doubt a function, in part, of sheer technical mastery of the material they were teaching, but it was also a function of their ability to con-

vey their conviction about it, and its effect on their character, their *being.*

Because of the need to set down a lot of examples of the material about the *muḥaddithāt*, I have, with one exception, avoided lengthy citation of the ḥadīths themselves that they were teaching. The one exception is ʿĀʾishah's recollection of the incident of the *ifk*, the slander against her. It is a long story (below, p. 190–95). It ends when her husband, the Prophet, advises her, if she has done wrong to repent and God will forgive her. She knows she is innocent and so turns away from the world that will not vindicate her, saying 'there is no help but in God'. When the Revelation declares her innocent, her mother instructs her to now go to her husband. She flatly refuses: 'By God, I will not go to him.' Because she is a teenager at the time of this incident, it is tempting to read in this disobedience the accents of rebelling adolescence. But in ʿĀʾishah's mature telling of it, it is presented as the moment when her faith is perfected, when she realizes that any obedience that is not, first, obedience to God is a burden to the self, an indignity; and every obedience that is for only God is full liberty. She turns away from parents, husband, from the Prophet himself: 'By God, I will not go to him. And I will not praise except God.' The power of agency that comes from such perfected surrender to God (*islām*) is evident in her conduct when, having led a battle against Muslims – an action she sincerely (and rightly) repented – and suffered a humiliating rout, she went directly to Basrah, where people flocked to her, not as a political faction, but to learn her ḥadīth and her *fiqh*, her understanding of Islam. The rout took nothing from her personal energy – nor from her reputation as a resource for knowledge of the religion. The all but incredible feats of mental strength and stamina, which are reported of the women scholars of the later periods, derive from the same kind and source of agency, the same achieved freedom of being.

(3) The 'If men can, why can't women' approach may also mislead readers of the material in this book for another reason. It rests on a string of unsafe assumptions: that the differences given in nature (gender is the one we are discussing), if enhanced

by law and custom, must lead to injustices *necessarily*; that those injustices should and can be reduced by social, legal and (since we *can do*) biological engineering; that such engineering is safe because the differences as given have little value in themselves, or in their connectedness with anything else.

I will not go into the familiar arguments about the negative effects of erasing the social expression of gender differences – from weakening the boundaries of personal and family life so that it is spilled into public space for the entertainment of others, to confused sexual behaviours, to impairment of the desire and drive, perhaps even the capacity, to have children. But the social experiment is only just into its second generation. So far there is not much evidence that women's entry into the high levels of government, business, etc. has led to any change in either the goals or the operations of these activities. The women do them just as well as the men and in just the same way; which suggests that their being women is not engaged when at work. But work patterns and structures take time to alter; it is rather early to be pronouncing on the long-term costs (personal and social) that have come along with the gains in justice for women. Those gains matter greatly. Here, I want only to explain that there is another effort for justice, coming from a different grounding, from different assumptions, and its distinctiveness should not be missed.

As this book shows, women scholars acquired and exercised the same authority as men scholars. Both did so *within* the well-known Islamic conventions of *ḥijāb* and of avoiding, to the extent practicable, such mixing of men and women as can lead to forbidden relationships. As Muslims understand it, *ḥijāb* is commanded by God as law-giver, as a social expression and marking of the gender differences commanded by Him as creator. The practice of *ḥijāb* is thus not dependent upon having reasons for it but upon its being His command. However, God as law-giver commands nothing that He as creator does not also enable, and a part of His enabling obedience is that His commands (like His creation) *are* intelligible, so that obedience can flow

from a more willing assent. Hence, Muslims are allowed to ask: what is the point of *ḥijāb*?

Muslims, men and women alike, are required to control their behaviour, how they look at, and how they appear to, each other. But only of women is it required that, in public, they cover their hair, and wear an over-garment, or clothing that does not caricature their bodily form: the meaning is – the opposite of modern Western conventions – to conceal, not reveal and project, their bodily presence. The meaning is not that women should be absent or invisible, but that they be present and visible with the power of their bodies switched off. What are the benefits of this? (1) Most of the time men and women dress to look normal, not to entice one another. But dress normality for men – except for the ignominies and anxieties of early adolescence – is derived from what other men see as normal; women, even when dressing only for each other, still evaluate their look among themselves by its appeal to men. *Ḥijāb* can screen women from the anxiety, at least when out in public, of being subject to and evaluated by the sexual gaze of men. (2) *Ḥijāb* has an educative function: it teaches chastity to the individual, who learns by it to inhibit the need to be appealing to men, and to the society in which the need to be self-disciplined is signalled and facilitated. (3) *Ḥijāb*, publicly and emphatically, marks gender differences; it therefore enables women – always assuming that they are active in the public domain – to project their being women without being sized up as objects of desire.

None of that will at all impress those whose landscape is intolerably impoverished by the absence of attractively presented women, or who need the seasoning of flirtation and associated behaviours to get through their day. Nor can it impress those who do not see *ḥijāb* except in terms of its symbolizing the oppression of women, who are prevented by it from ever enjoying 'the wind in their hair' or 'the sun on their bodies'. (In fact, such enjoyment is not forbidden, only the display of it to men.) Women who declare that they have *chosen* to wear *ḥijāb* are said to have internalized their oppression, that is, they are not allowed the dignity of being believed. Yet no-one says of the

adolescent or younger girls who hurt their own bodies in order to have (or because they never can have) the right 'look': 'they have internalized an oppressive system'. Rather, these negative outcomes are said to be offset by the benefits, overall, to the fashion and entertainment industries. It would be decent to allow Muslims to say: overall, the benefits of *ḥijāb* outweigh any nuisance in it.

Anyway, despite pressures, believing men and women will not, for the sake of Western tastes, abandon the commands of God and His Messenger to practice *ḥijāb*. It is a part of the faith. The great shaykhahs who are the subject of this book, never doubted its obligatoriness. Nor is there the least evidence that it inhibited them from teaching men, or learning from men. Clearly, however, there are practical issues involved of how space was used, how voices were projected so questions could be taken and answered, and how students and teachers could know how the other had reacted. There is no direct discussion of these practical matters in the sources. One infers from that, that people acted in good faith and, in the particular, local conditions, made such arrangements as were necessary to convey knowledge of the religion to those who came seeking it.

Within Islamic tradition, it is generally accepted that one should guard oneself and society from whatever leads to the prohibited. Inducements to the prohibited cannot strictly be called prohibited, but one tries to behave as if they were without calling them so. It is not so well accepted that impediments to what is commanded or expressly permitted should be minimized. Certainly, the risk of sin is not a sufficient ground for preventing behaviour that is in itself lawful and does not intend or systematically induce the unlawful. There is the ḥadīth about the man who came to the Prophet to confess that, in the marketplace of Madinah, he had kissed a woman who was just there doing her shopping. The Prophet did not order the market closed or forbid women doing lawful business in it. First, he turned away, trying not to hear the man's confession; but the man persisted. Then, after the prayer, the Prophet asked the man to confirm that he too had prayed. He did so. Then God sent down the verse (*Hūd*, 11. 114: *Establish the prayer at the ends*

of the day and approaches of the night. Surely good deeds take away bad deeds. That is a reminder for those who remember. The man asked: 'Is this for me?' The Prophet said: 'For whoever takes it.'[1] The meaning is that it is for everyone who takes the opportunity, by prayer, to undo the attraction of sin so that it is not established in the heart and therefore can have very limited, if any, entail.

One reason we do not have more records about more of the *muḥaddithāt* is a broad interpretation of the duty of *ḥijāb*: so much weight is given to keeping public and private domains distinct that details about the accomplishments of the women of the household are held undisclosed. A reliable source states, for example, that Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Najjār (d. 643) had some 400 women teachers.[2] Who were they? I was able to track down the names of only a few of them. Al-Qurashī (d. 775) wrote a book on Ḥanafī jurists with a section on women called *Ṭabaqāt al-nisāʾ*, which he begins: 'This is a book in which I will mention what has come to my knowledge about the women scholars among our companions [i.e. fellow-Ḥanafī jurists]. I got very little information [about them] and there is no doubt that the state of women is based on covering (*satr*).'[3]

The misreading or misuse of this book from a 'women's studies' approach is possible because that approach has no basis in the sources of the *Sunnah*. Sadly, there is also a lot of Islamic scholarship – unlike that of the women whose work is recorded here – that is also weakly grounded in the *Sunnah*. An extreme example is the opinion that women should not be taught writing, because if they are they will write letters (presumably of some improper kind). Apart from its self-evident absurdity, and its preventing much good, this opinion is flatly contradicted by the

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Mawāqīt al-ṣalāh*, bāb *al-ṣalāh kaffārah*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tawbah*, bāb *qawli-hi taʿālā inna l-ḥasanāt yudhhibna al-sayyiʾāt*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, bāb *wa min sūrah Hūd*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Iqāmat al-ṣalāh*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī anna al-ṣalāta kaffārah*. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 133. [3]AL-QURASHĪ, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*, iv. 1–2.

precedent of the Companions and their Successors. I will not labour the point: there is no need to as the book is packed with fully referenced counter-examples to that kind of thinking.

Because of the number of names and the need to identify people by giving most elements of the name and (if known) date of death, it saved some space to use only Hijri dates. That is in any case my practice in the original Arabic from which this work is adapted. Readers who find this disorienting, may find the table below useful. The 1st Muḥarram of year 1 AH corresponds to 16 July 622 AD.

AD	AH	AD	AH	AD	AH
718	100 AH	1203	600 AH	1688	1100 AH
815	200	1300	700	1785	1200
912	300	1397	800	1882	1300
1009	400	1494	900	1979	1400
1106	500	1591	1000	15/7/2007	29/6/1428

Acknowledgements

The great *tābiʿiyyah* Umm al-Dardā' said (below, p. 154) that God's provision does not reach us as a raining down of gold or silver but through each other. I cannot mention individually all those through whom I have been enabled to do this work – all my teachers and colleagues; the patient, professional staff of all the libraries I have used. For access to precious documents, I am most grateful to Mawlānā Muhammad Deedat, librarian at Dār al-Ulum, Bury (UK); Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyyah (Damascus), and the Shibli Library Nadwat al-Ulama (Lucknow). Among my local colleagues, I thank Hassan Abidin, Djihan Skinner, and Alexander Kent for encouragement over many years; Jamil Qureshi for pushing for an English adaptation of the *Muqaddimah*, and for being always on hand to help with presentation, argument and language. I thank Carla Power for making my work known through her generous articles in the press. I thank my daughters, specially Sumaiya, for doing so much of the typing and proof-reading.

As this work is about teaching of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, it is proper always to remember the supplication: *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* (God pray over him and grant him peace). I end in hope that good comes by this book to those who brought it about and to its readers – it may do so only if He wills, to Whom all praise and thanks are due.

Mohammad Akram
Oxford, July 2007

Introduction

It surprises people to learn that women, living under an Islamic order, could be scholars, that is, hold the authority that attaches to being knowledgeable about what Islam commands, and therefore sought after and deferred to. The typical Western view is that no social order has (or aspires to have) more 'religion' in it than an Islamic one, and the more 'religion' a society has in it, the more restricted will be the scope in that society for women to enjoy agency and authority. Behind that is the assumption that religion is 'really' a human construct, done mainly by men and therefore done to secure advantages for them at the expense of women. Muslims, of course, do not share this view.

One of the reasons for Muslim conviction that the Qurʾān is God's word is that it is, though expressed in the vehicle of the human language of its first audience (Arabic), free of limiting human perspectives. The Qurʾān as a whole has neither narrative focus or structure: it is not the epic of an individual or a tribe, on which generations have laboured to give meaning to what the individual or tribe did or had done to them. It has no restrictive geographical focus: it does not build up or explain the charisma of a place or place-name. It does not build up or justify some particular human institution such as kingship or priesthood. It is not, on the other hand, either a random or closely connected assemblage of abstract moral or legal or philosophical principles. For believers it is a connecting of the divine will directly with a real human situation, made exemplary by that connection. It addresses the people in that situation with commands and consolation, with threat and promise, and guides them to what will better prepare their living in this world to earn contentment in the eternal life hereafter. Quite explicitly, it also gives to the

precepts and practice of the mortal on whom it was sent down a unique authority. The Qurʾān has authority, and the Messenger's *Sunnah* has authority by it. The divine promise is that these paired sources of guidance suffice as the framework within which the believers can order their affairs in a way that pleases their Creator. Accordingly, while Muslims have disagreed and fought over just about everything else, they have never done so about the authority of the Qurʾān and *Sunnah*. This book is a demonstration of women's access to that authority.

The best guidance, unassisted by Revelation, that human beings might hope for is that their law-givers establish rules as if 'from behind a veil of ignorance', as if they did not know who would benefit by such rules and who would suffer. In reality that can never happen, because human perspectives are always, even with the best of intentions, partial. In practice human law-givers always prefer their own tastes and interests, being always ready to believe that their interests are in fact to everybody's advantage in the long term – and so their laws prefer some people over others – for example, property-owners over those without property, or men over women, or the interests of their own nation over some other. There is some consolation in the fact that, through the effort of learning from experience, revision of past errors is possible.

In the Qurʾān and *Sunnah* Muslims believe they have a framework of guidance that is strictly impartial and sufficient because God's knowledge and mercy encompass all beings and all their pasts and futures. Any human derivation from and within that framework is subject to revision, but the framework itself is not. Accordingly, in the Islamic tradition, to say 'God says in His Book' decides the argument. Where it is not certain how the guidance of the Qurʾān is to be acted upon, Muslims look to the example of how God's Messenger acted in the same or a similar situation. The record of his example (*Sunnah*) is now, for all practical purposes, conveyed through a body of texts, known singly and collectively as ḥadīth (lit. 'saying'). A man who becomes expert in knowledge of the ḥadīth is called a *muḥaddith*; a woman, *muḥaddithah* (plural, *muḥaddithāt*). Knowledge of ḥadīth is deci-

sive in informing *fiqh*, understanding the guidance as (legal) rules and (social) norms; one who attains skill in *fiqh* is called *faqīh(ah)*. It is decisive in informing *iftāʾ*, the responsa (fatwas) of scholars to questions the people put to them on specific matters; 'mufti' means one who gives fatwas. Knowledge of ḥadīth is decisive also in informing *tafsīr*, interpretative commentary of the Qurʾān, since, by its own command, the Prophet's understanding of it must be preferred over anyone else's. Readers should understand that, in the orthodox or Sunni tradition, a Muslim is not bound by anybody else's *fiqh* or *iftāʾ* or *tafsīr*. The scholars in Islam dispose authority in society; they do not directly dispose power. The distinction was (and remains) of the utmost importance for their credibility and legitimacy with the people.

Women attained high rank in all spheres of knowledge of the religion, and, as this book will show, they were sought after for their *fiqh*, for their fatwas, and for *tafsīr*. Primarily, I am concerned here with their achievement and role as *muḥaddithāt*. In this chapter I set out, first, the overall impact of Qurʾān and *Sunnah* in changing attitudes to women; in the second section, I explain different dimensions of the change as instituted or urged by Qurʾān and *Sunnah*; in the third what the women themselves did in the formative period of Islam so that men, in a sense, *had to* accept that change.

THE IMPACT OF THE BOOK AND *SUNNAH*

The Qurʾān rebukes the people of the *jāhiliyyah* (the Ignorance before Islam) for their negative attitude to women (*al-Naḥl*, 16. 58–59): *When news is brought to one of them of [the birth of] a girl, his face darkens, and he is chafing within! He hides himself from his folk, because of the evil he has had news of. Shall he keep it in disdain, or bury it in the dust? Ah – how evil the judgement they come to!* The costly prospect of bringing up a daughter (a son was expected to enhance a clan's military and economic potential) perhaps explains this negative response to the birth of a girl. Burying infant girls alive was a custom among some (not all) of the Arab tribes of the time. The Qurʾān warns of retribution for this gross atrocity

on the day *When the infant buried alive shall be asked for what sin she was killed* (*al-Takwīr*, 81. 8–9).

Human rights and duties indicated in the Qurʾān are pegged to two fundamentals that are the same for men and women – namely their being creatures and slaves of God, their Creator and Lord, and their being the issue of a single human self. God has said in the Qurʾān (*al-Nisāʾ*, 4. 1): *O humankind, be wary of your Lord who created you from a single self, and from it created its pair, and from the pair of them scattered many men and women. Be wary of God, through Whom you ask of one another [your rights and needs] and close kindred:*[1] *God is ever-watchful over you.* And (*al-Aʿrāf*, 6. 189): *He it is Who created you from a single self, and made from it its mate, so that he might settle at rest with her.* Male and female are created for the same purpose: *I have not created jinn and humankind except so that they worship Me* (*al-Dhāriyāt*, 51. 56). The Qurʾānic term *ʿabd* signifies both 'worshipper' and 'slave' in relation to God. The duties owed to God, and the virtues that ensue from the effort to do them, are the same for men and women. This is affirmed in a well-known Qurʾānic verse. The verse, and the occasion of its revelation are recorded in this ḥadīth, narrated by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Shaybah:

I heard Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: I asked the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – Why are we [women] not mentioned in the Qurʾān as the men are mentioned? [...] Then I was alerted that day by his call on the pulpit. [...] At that moment I was combing my hair. I gathered up my hair and went to one of the rooms of my house; I listened hard. I heard him saying on the pulpit: O people, God says in His Book: *The muslim men and muslim women; the believing men and believing women; the men who are obedient [to God] and women who are obedient [to God]; the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful; the men who are persevering and patient and the women who are persevering and patient; the men who give alms and the women who give alms; the men who are humble and the women who are humble; the men who fast and the*

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[1] 'close kindred': literally, 'the wombs', here understood to mean the issue thereof.

women who fast; the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, and the men who remember God much and the women who remember God much – God has prepared for them forgiveness and a great reward.[1]

The burden of duties owed to God is carried individually: responsibilities in this world and the recompense hereafter are particular to each self. The diversity of human aptitudes and of the opportunities that come into particular lives must be seen in the light of God's affirmation that He does not burden any self with a responsibility that He has not also enabled it to discharge. We do not find in the orthodox Islamic tradition, therefore, any argument for an intermediate authority between human beings and God. In that tradition, all questions of how to serve God, as also of how to settle differences or disputes between people in their worldly affairs, are referred to the guidance of Qur᾿ān and *Sunnah*. Access to this guidance is not a function of belonging to a particular group (say, the tribe of Quraysh rather than some other Arab or non-Arab people), or to a particular gender (men rather than women) or to a particular social class (say, the nobility rather than slaves). It is a function strictly of knowledge of and personal adherence to Qur᾿ān and *Sunnah*.

Having 'the knowledge', and the conscientious preserving, transmitting and understanding of it, is the strong basis for the public authority that learned Muslims, men and women, were able to command. Necessarily, there were different opinions on the import of the knowledge people had, but the differences were not settled on the basis of the gender or the tribe or socio-economic class of the person who conveyed it.

An example is the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays. She reports that when she was divorced from her husband, the Prophet did not require him to provide accommodation and expenses for her until the end of her *ʿiddah*, the period after which she would be free to re-marry. ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb rejected this ḥadīth; so did Zayd ibn Thābit, ʿĀ᾿ishah, and other jurists. They argued that it contradicts the Qur᾿ān's command that men must support

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[1] AL-ḤĀKIM, *al-Mustadrak*, ii. 416. The verse cited is *al-Aḥzāb*, 33. 35.

divorced wives during the *ʿiddah*. If they had been motivated by 'patriarchal attitudes', they would surely have acted on the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah, since it appears to favour men. In any event (details will come in the next chapter) Fāṭimah was never stopped from narrating the ḥadīth; it was recorded in all the books; over time, for their different reasons, jurists took different positions about it. It would have been so if the same ḥadīth had been narrated by a man, say the ex-husband, rather than the ex-wife.

Another example is narrated by Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab about ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb during the caliphate of Abū Bakr. ʿUmar divorced the mother of his son ʿĀṣim, then saw her somewhere with their son and took him from her. She appealed her case to Abū Bakr. The caliph judged that ʿĀṣim ibn ʿUmar remain with his mother until grown up or until she re-married.[1] This verdict followed the *Sunnah*, established by the report (among others) that a woman came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – my womb was his vessel, my arm was his container, and my breast was his drink. And now his father claims that he is going to snatch him from me. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: You have more right over the child while you do not re-marry.'[2] Neither ʿUmar's rank as one of the most senior of the Companions, nor his being Abū Bakr's dearest friend, nor his argument that he had more to give the boy, swayed the judgement in his favour. Abū Bakr said: 'O ʿUmar, the moisture of her lips is better for him than the honey in your house.'[3]

A great many examples will be presented in the course of this book of the imāms in ḥadīth and law – called imāms because they are followed – who had women teachers and praised their learning, intelligence and piety. In so doing, they were following the lead of the Companions and their Successors – and again, many examples will come – who turned to the learned women

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[1] AL-BAYHAQĪ, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, *Nafaqāt*, bāb *al-umm tatazawwaj wa yaskuṭu ḥaqqu-hā min ḥaḍānat al-walad wa yantaqilu ilā jaddati-h.* [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *man aḥaqq bi-l-walad.* [3] AL-MARGHINĀNĪ, *al-Hidāyah*, ii. 317.

of their generation for general advice, for a particular ruling, for help in interpreting and implementing the guidance of Qur'an and *Sunnah*. To be sure, it was largely men who held the formal posts like qāḍī, but they could discharge their duties only from the authority of Qurʾān and *Sunnah*, to which women also could appeal. A striking case is that of ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, the great *tābiʿiyyah* (Successor), *muḥaddithah* and *faqīhah*, who intervened in a court case in Madinah to prevent a miscarriage of justice (details, p. 279–80). It is remarkable enough that she knew that the case was in progress and the circumstances of it and what sentence the qāḍī had passed but not yet carried out. Many famous men jurists were resident and active in the city; none of them intervened. What is astonishing is that she did intervene, and no-one questioned her right to do so. The defendant was a non-Muslim, not known to ʿAmrah except as the defendant in this suit, in which she had no personal, private interest. The qāḍī reversed his decision and released the defendant only because he could have no argument against the authority of the ḥadīth she was able to cite. He did not know or remember it, or simply failed to bring it to bear when reaching his judgement: once he knew the ḥadīth, he did as a Muslim should – he acted upon it.

The distance is huge between a society in which some men held womanhood in such contempt that they could countenance burying infant daughters alive, and one in which they would defer to the authority of a woman just because she had knowledge that they did not. It is an extraordinary distance to have covered within a single generation. How was it possible?

THE WOMEN'S AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED BY THE QURʾĀN AND SUNNAH

The short answer is that it was possible because, once they believed the Revelation to be the word of their Creator, it would have been irrational for them not to act upon its command. The Qurʾān speaks about women in general and specific terms. It does not associate womanhood with inferiority or deficiency of any sort, or any primordial sin, or any disposition to sin not

also found in men, or any disposition to induce sin in others not also found in men. It does not regard women as an appendage of men, but as distinct beings, each called individually, just as are men. The language of the Qurʾān, Arabic, like many others, uses masculine forms to mean women also, unless context expressly excludes them. The grammar does not require women to be expressly included; it is all the more striking therefore when that explicit including occurs. I have quoted above verse 33. 35 enumerating the virtues, distinctly for men and women. Starting with the next verse in that sūrah, here are a few more examples:

It is not for a believing man or believing woman, when God and His Messenger have decided a matter [...] (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33. 36). *Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, male or female* (*Āl ʿImrān*, 3. 195). *Whoever does righteous deeds, male or female, and is a believer, him We shall enliven to a good life, and We shall pay them certainly a reward proportioned to the best of what they used to do* (*al-Naḥl*, 16. 97). *Whoever does righteous deeds, from among the male or the female, and he is a believer, those will enter Paradise [...]* (*al-Nisāʾ*, 4. 124). *The believing men and believing women are protecting friends (awliyāʾ) of one another, they bid to good (al-maʿrūf), and forbid from evil (al-munkar); they establish the prayer and give the alms (zakāh) and obey God and His Messenger* (*al-Tawbah*, 9. 71).

Of course, there is subject-matter where we would expect women to be mentioned – for example, the injunctions, ethical and legal, related to marriage and divorce; or the command to be kind to parents, where the travail of mothers is singled out (*Luqmān*, 31. 14; *al-Aḥqāf*, 46. 15). But even where women are not the subject, the Book is concerned to include them in the call to Islam: the threat and the promise apply to them no less or more than to men.

For believers, the Book is (as I explained earlier) a direct engagement of the divine will with a real human situation, made exemplary by that engagement. Of several such occasions related to women, one of the best known is the background of the sūrah called *al-Mujādalah*, 'the disputing'. Yūsuf ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Salām narrates from Khawlah bint Thaʿlabah (wife of Aws ibn al-Sāmit the brother of ʿUbādah ibn Sāmit) that she said:

One day my husband entered upon me. He talked to me about something and he got annoyed. So I answered him back. He said: You are to me 'as the back of my mother' [a formula of repudiation]. Then he left and sat in a gathering of his people. Then he came back to me. He wanted me, and I refrained [from him], then he pulled me by force and I struggled with him. Then I overcame him by what a weak woman can overcome [a man by] and I said: By Him in Whose hand is Khawlah's soul, never will your hand reach me until God sends down His judgement regarding my and your case. Then I came to the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – complaining to him [about] what [treatment] I had received from my husband. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: He is your husband and your cousin, so be wary of God. Then God sent down [the verses, from 58. 1]: *God has heard the speech of her who disputes with you concerning her husband, and complains to God. And God is hearing the exchange between you both. God is all-hearing, all-seeing.* Then God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Ask him to free a slave [by way of expiation]. I said, O Messenger of God, he does not have any slave to free. He said: Then he should fast two continuous months. I said: O Messenger of God, he is an old and elderly person, he cannot fast. He – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Then he should feed sixty poor people. I said: By God, he does not own anything to feed the poor with. Then he said: We will help him with a big container of dates. I said: I will help him with another container. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – gave that [for him] in charity.[1]

(The Qurʾānic verses not cited above (58. 2–5) go on to forbid use of the ugly formula of repudiation, and to specify the acts of expiation for the utterance of false oaths, as in the ḥadīth.)

By calling women to Islam directly, the Book compels men to recognize them as independent moral beings. For a clear example of that, see (below, p. 289) the response of ʿUmar – at this time the ruler of a mighty empire – to a public scolding by the same Khawlah bint Thaʿlabah, whose hadith we have just read, and how he explains his response.

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[1] AL-MIZZĪ (d. 742), *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxviii. 313–14.

Similarly, the Qurʾān establishes for women a distinct legal individuality, through rights of property and inheritance, and marriage contracts. The men are required to provide for their families; the women are not. Their property, including the dowry, remains theirs through the marriage, though they may choose to spend on their husbands (as in the example above) or their children, as free-will offering or charity. (This seeming inequality favouring women is balanced by the Qurʾān's stipulation of different inheritance portions for sons and daughters: *al-Nisāʾ*, 4. 7, 11). On marriage, the Qurʾān (*al-Baqarah*, 2. 232) declares the woman's competence to choose: *Do not obstruct them (lā taʿḍulū-hunna) from marrying their husbands, if they mutually agree in the normal way (bi-l-maʿrūf).* One Khansāʾ bint Khidhām al-Anṣāriyyah al-Awsiyyah came before the Prophet to protest that her father had married her to someone she did not like. The Prophet annulled that marriage.[1] ʿĀʾishah has narrated that a young woman called on her and said: 'My father has married me to his nephew to raise [the nephew's] low class and I am not happy with this marriage.' ʿĀʾishah asked her to wait until the Prophet came. When he did, the woman informed him and he sent for the father. Then, in the father's presence he entrusted the matter to the young woman directly. She said: 'I have now allowed what my father did. I [only] wanted to teach the women that the fathers do not own anything of the matter.'[2]

Another illustration of the legal competence of women is the right to grant refuge to a stranger or enemy, which is then binding on the community. Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Taymī narrates one such incident concerning Abū l-ʿĀṣ ibn al-Rabīʿ. This man was an unbeliever formerly married to the Prophet's daughter, Zaynab. He and his trading caravan returning from Syria were captured in a raid by the Muslims and brought back

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *idhā zawwaj al-rajul ibnatu-hu wa hiya kārihatun fa-nikāḥu-hu mardūd.* [2] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *yankiḥ al-abu wa ghayru-hu al-bikr wa-l-thayyib illā bi-riḍā-hā*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *al-bikr yuzawwiju-hā abū-hā wa hiya kārihatun*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *man zawwaja ibnata-hu wa hiya kārihatun.*

to Madinah in year 6 AH. There he made his way to Zaynab, begged refuge and she granted it. She stood at her door and called out in a loud voice: 'I have granted protection to Abū l-ʿĀṣ ibn al-Rabīʿ.' The Prophet confirmed that the people had heard this announcement and then he said: 'The believers are one hand against other people. The lowest of the believers can grant protection on their behalf. And we have granted protection to whoever she has granted protection to.' Later, at Zaynab's request, the goods of Abū l-ʿĀṣ were restored to him. However, while he remained an unbeliever, he was forbidden to go near to Zaynab. He returned to Makkah and discharged his obligations with the goods, then embraced Islam and made his way back to Madinah in Muḥarram of the following year. The Prophet restored his marriage to Zaynab.[1]

Another such incident concerns Umm Hānī, told by herself. 'I said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – the son of my mother [meaning her brother ʿAlī] claims that he is going to kill a man to whom I have granted protection, So-and-so son of Hubayrah. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: 'We have granted protection to whoever you have granted protection to, O Umm Hānī.'[2]

That women can think and act independently in such ways is the ground upon which the final judgement of their actions is based – as is the case for men. Women can choose the wrong path as well as the right one. The Qurʾānic example of the former are the wives of the prophets Lūṭ (Lot) and Nūḥ (Noah); of the latter, the wife of Pharaoh, and the mother of the prophet ʿĪsā (Jesus) (see *al-Taḥrīm*, 66. 10–12). Pharaoh's wife is praised for her spiritual insight, and her moral courage in refusing to be intimidated by her husband's arrogance and evil. Maryam is an example of perfect faith and purity (see *Āl ʿImrān*, 3. 37, 40–42). She suffers what was decreed for her of the slanders of her

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[1] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 33. [2] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Jizyah wa-l-muwādaʿah*, bāb *amān al-nisāʾ wa jiwāri-hinn*. MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh al-muṣafirīn wa qaṣri-hā*...

people without any diminution of trust in God. The portrait of her is one of the most moving passages in the Qurʾān, specially the account of how she endures pain when the prophet ʿĪsā is born, and how she is comforted after that (*Maryam*, 19. 16–34). Another remarkable portrait is that of the Queen of Sabāʾ: she is a model of wise political leadership, intellectual curiosity and, eventually, spiritual insight (*al-Naml*, 27. 23–44).

Alongside the Revelation, there was the teaching and example of the Prophet. He was not teaching only the men. The women were included in the public assemblies when he preached; he also set time aside for them, separately from the men, and he dealt with their questions personally when they came to him or to his wives. A full account of this effort will come in Chapter 2. The Prophet, obedient to the Qurʾān's command, consulted his Companions, the women as well as the men, before critical decisions. He accepted their counsel if it seemed right to him. A famous incident of this kind happened on the occasion of the truce of Ḥudaybiyyah agreed with the unbelievers of Makkah. After the battle of Badr, this was the most important turning-point in the formative history of Islam.

The Muslims had gone to Makkah in the expectation of doing the ḥajj, but in the end, the unbelievers refused them entry to the city. After tense negotiations, the terms of the truce agreed included the Muslims' returning to Madinah without doing the ḥajj. This and other terms seemed to some of the Muslims humiliating and one-sided. The Prophet ordered his Companions to sacrifice their animals and shave their heads (to indicate coming out of the state of *iḥrām*, the end of pilgrimage sanctity). The narrator of this ḥadīth says: 'By God, no single man from among them stood up on that [command to carry it out].' The Prophet commanded them three times, and none stood up. He went then to his wife Umm Salamah and told her what he faced from the men. She said: 'O Prophet of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – if you will, go out and do not utter a word to any of them until [after] you have sacrificed your camels and called your barber and he has shaved your head.'

The advice was, in essence, to act decisively and the men would follow, even if reluctantly. This is indeed what happened.[1]

THE WOMEN'S AUTHORITY ESTABLISHED BY THEIR OWN ACTIONS

The affirmation that authority in Islam derives from Qur'ān and *Sunnah* is what distinguishes believers from unbelievers in their faith, their deeds and their style of life. Particularly in the first years, the consequences of that affirmation were opprobrium, persecution, torture and, for some, death. Sons were separated from fathers, husbands from wives, brothers from brothers, and all were excluded to some degree from the system of tribal allegiances and protections. Since women were called to and entered the faith individually, they too faced and suffered the very same separations and vulnerability, the same aloneness, and, perhaps, being women, suffered more acutely. A well-known case is Fāṭimah, the sister of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the future caliph, then one of Islam's most assiduous (and being ʿUmar, most competent) detractors and persecutors. He struck her violently when he found her reciting the Qur'ān in secret, but then her steadfast dignity in answer to his ill-temper led to his embracing the religion he had wanted to destroy.

Many examples will come in the chapters ahead of the women's diligence in seeking knowledge of the religion, then recording, transmitting and implementing it. So too examples will come of their dedication to self-discipline, not for its own sake, but in order the better to embody Islam in their whole environment and instil it in the hearts of their students. The best of the believing women were no less devoted to supererogatory remembrances and prayer than the best of the believing men. They too wanted to attend the mosque for the night prayer, and they were to be permitted: Sālim ibn ʿAbdillāh narrates from his father ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar that the Prophet said: 'When your women ask your permission to go to the

[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Shurūṭ*, bāb *al-shurūṭ fi-l-jihād*.

mosque in the night, give them permission.'[1] The women, no less than the men, strove to memorize the Qurʾān, to have it by heart and in the heart; and again, they too took note of the look and manner of the Prophet in all that he did, and committed to memory what they could of his sayings, telling one another what they had witnessed on occasions that some had missed but others not. Details will come in the course of the book.

After the truce of Ḥudaybiyyah, the tide turned, to the extent that God willed, in favour of the Muslims, and against their enemies among the idolaters and the People of the Book. Makkah was conquered without bloodshed and past enemies forgiven as they gave allegiance to the Prophet and to Islam. At the time of the death of the Prophet, when Revelation ceased, all the tribes of the Arab peninsula had embraced Islam, some politically, some in a better way. The believers needed to and did take stock of the turning-points in the formative years of this religion. To a limited extent, the notion was established of seniority in Islam, of commitment to it when this was a trial, and commitment after that. At most of the critical moments women were present. Women were among those who sought refuge in Abyssinia in the first or minor *hijrah*; among the Muslims of Yathrib (later called Madinah) who gave the second 'Pledge of ʿAqaba' before the great Hijrah itself. Again, women were witnesses of the time when, by divine command, the orientation of the Muslims was turned about, from Jerusalem to Makkah. Before the truce of Ḥudaybiyyah was agreed, and it seemed a battle would be imposed upon them, the Prophet, asked the Muslims (they were gathered by a tree), to re-affirm their allegiance to him. So decisive was this show of commitment, that 'the allegiance of the tree' is mentioned in the Qurʾān itself. Women took part in this also.

We can get a sense of the historical weight that some of the Companions carried from a couple of biographical notices. Ibn

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *khurūj al-nisāʾ ilā l-masjid bi-l-layl wa-l-ghalas*.

ʿAbd al-Barr says in his account of Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh:[1] 'She is a Companion of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and she has narrated his ḥadīth. And the people of Madinah have narrated ḥadīth from her. Ahmad ibn Zuhayr says: I heard my father saying: Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh is from those women who did allegiance under the tree.' Similarly, of Salmā bint Qays ibn ʿAmr from the clan of ʿAdī ibn al-Najjār, whose *kunyah* is Umm al-Mundhir, a sister of Salīṭ ibn Qays who was one of those present at the battle of Badr, Abū Nuʿaym says: 'She was one of the maternal aunts of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. Some say: She was a paternal aunt of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. She prayed in the direction of both *qiblah*s and she was among those women who did allegiance with the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*.'[2]

The single most important event was the Hijrah from Makkah to Madinah. It tested the will of the believers to quit their past bonds, to apply the faith in their hearts to the building of a way of life, a social order. That is why, later, it was recognized as the beginning of the Islamic era. Many women passed this test, some going with husbands and family, some alone, without protection. Umm Kulthūm bint ʿUqbah was from a house well-known for unbelief and enmity to the Prophet. She did the Hijrah by herself. Her brothers al-Walīd and ʿUmārah tracked her until they reached Madinah the day after she did, and demanded that she be handed over to them. Umm Kulthūm said: 'O Messenger of God, I am a woman, and you know how frail women are; if you return me to the unbelievers, they will put me on trial for my religion, and I will not be able to stand firm.'[3] Then the famous verses of *al-Mumtaḥanah* were sent down (60. 10–13). The first of them begins: *O believers! When believing women come to you as fugitives, examine them. God knows better about their faith. Then if you know them for true believers, do not send them back to the unbe-*

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[1] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istiʿāb*, ii. 731.
[2] ABŪ NUʿAYM AL-AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 248. [3] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 230.

lievers. They are not lawful for the unbelievers and the unbelievers are not lawful for them.

I do not know of another religious tradition in which women were so central, so present, so active in its formative history. It follows that they were recognized as 'senior' in a social order in which authority was explicitly based upon commitment to and knowledge of the religion. It cannot then be a surprise that a woman had the authority to continue to narrate a ḥadīth that others did not recognize as one that should be acted upon – the case of the Companion Fāṭimah bint Qays; or that a woman could challenge the decision of a court and the decision be overturned because the ḥadīth she had reported was decisive and clear – the case of the Successor, ᶜAmrah bint ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān. As a final point while reflecting on what authority women had and should have in Islam, we might remember that, after the Prophet himself, the first person to hear the first words revealed from the Book, was his wife Khadījah, who believed in him; and the first *muṣḥaf* or collection of leaves on which the Qurʾān was secured in writing (that is, outside the hearts of the believers) was entrusted to the safe-keeping of his wife, Ḥafṣah bint ᶜUmar.[1]

Before I turn to an exposition of how women acquired and exercised their role as *muḥaddithāt*, I should perhaps note that ḥadīth is only one, though undoubtedly the most important, sphere of scholarly effort in which Muslim women excelled. This is not the place to report their varied contributions to *tajwīd* and *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, grammar and lexicography, poetry and other literary composition, theology, logic, philosophy, history and biography, medicine, the arts of the book and calligraphy, and many of the crafts that we recognize and admire as Islamic. However, I have provided brief notes with references, perhaps of interest to readers who want to follow them up, in an informal article available on line.[2]

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān*, bāb, *jamᶜ al-Qurʾān*.
[2] *www.interfacepublications.com/images/pdf/AKRAM_Article2.pdf*

Chapter 1

The legal conditions for narrating ḥadīth

There is no difference between men and women as regards the legal conditions for receiving and transmitting ḥadīth. If some people have a doubt about this it is because they muddle the conditions that apply to giving testimony in a legal suit with those that apply to passing on reports. While there are clear similarities between the two, there are also important differences that jurists have recognized.

A Prophetic ḥadīth is a text which, it is claimed, includes words that the Prophet uttered or that record his unspoken response to some action or event that he witnessed. The qualifications of the person transmitting such a text are the same as those that apply to the reception and transmission of reports generally, namely truthfulness and integrity, a competent and accurate memory, and being free of prejudice or compulsion of any sort that might be presumed to distort the reporting. In respect of general qualifications like that there can be no difference between men and women. Unfortunately, people confound reporting with giving testimony; then, having wholly misunderstood the quite particular conditions under which the testimony of two women is accorded the same weight as the testimony of one man, make the false inference that women's reporting of ḥadīth might (or even must) be considered weaker than that of men. It is necessary therefore to explain the particular conditions of testimony *(shahādah)*, and the differences between that and reporting or narration *(riwāyah)*.

TESTIMONY AND NARRATION

Many people misunderstand the meaning of God's saying:

O believers, when you make one another liable (tadāyantum), then put it in writing. And let a scribe write [it] between you justly (bi-l-ʿadl) [...]. And call to witness two witnesses from among your men. And if two men are not [to hand], then a man and two women from those you accept as witnesses, so that if one of the two errs [in what she remembers], then one of the two may remind (tudhakkira) the other. (*al-Baqarah*, 2. 282)

What is meant by a liability (*dayn*) is not a bare lending (*qarḍ*), but an arrangement whereby one party accepts an obligation to the other that must be discharged in a certain way. Often, such dealings are done in an idiom that people familiar with them become fluent in, but which outsiders do not necessarily understand fully or accurately because, between people familiar with a thing, much can be left implicit. The idiom varies between nations and regions, even between different markets in the same country. For example, how people transact business in a modern stock exchange would be quite difficult for me to follow because I am unfamiliar with it – it may even be incomprehensible. It follows that, for transactions like that,[1] I am unlikely to be considered among 'those you accept as witnesses'. That kind of relative disability is what is meant, and what is understood in Islamic law, by the command to get, if two men are not available, one man and two women to witness a transaction that entails a liability. There is not, in Islamic law, a general preference for the testimony of men over that of women, but there is, following the command of the Qurʾān, such a preference in the particular circumstances where men are more familiar with the

[1]Shaykh Saʿīd Ramaḍān AL-BŪṬĪ reports on a visit to the New York stock exchange: 'As I was looking at the crowd, and thinking about the great noise and hectic commotion, I was curious to find any woman busy in what the men were busy in. I could not see even one woman.' (*al-Marʾah bayna ṭughyān al-niẓām al-gharbī wa laṭāʾif al-tashrīʿ al-rabbānī*, 149).

idiom of the matter than women. We can be quite sure of this because the same principle applies the other way – there are particular circumstances in which the testimony of women is preferred to that of men.

The qualities of 'those you accept as witnesses' are of two kinds. Firstly, the reputation of the witness for (i) *ʿadālah* (i.e. integrity, probity), together with an absence of any cause of bias (like enmity against one party, or family relationship with the other party); and (ii) *ḍabṭ* ('strong grasp', i.e. a sound and reliable memory). Secondly, the reputation of the witness for familiarity with and understanding of the matter about which the testimony is to be taken.

The testimony of one whose *ʿadālah* is defective, or the soundness of whose memory is doubtful, is not acceptable, whether the witness is a man or woman. Similarly, a testimony against an enemy, or on behalf of a relative, is not acceptable, whether the witness is a man or a woman. If those conditions are met, the witness must then be known to have some actual contact with the kind of matter about which the testimony is being taken; this is considered essential to safe testimony. If a fair degree of such contact is not established, then the testimony of that witness will be doubted, whether the witness is a man or a woman. If people differ in their contact with the kind of matter for which they are witnessing, then preference goes to those with greater experience in it.

Evidently, in matters related to feeding, care and upbringing of children, and lineage and what is like that, the testimony of women is better informed than that of men. It is narrated from Imām ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī (d. *ca.* 100) that he said: 'There are certain testimonies where only the testimony of women is allowed.'[1] As for financial matters and business issues, and the disputes and claims that rise in them, both men and women have contact with them; but men's involvement with these issues is more than women's. If we consider the question with an eye to

[1] IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYAH (d. 751), *al-Ṭuruq al-ḥukmiyyah*, 152.

the everyday reality of the norms that prevail in most societies most of the time, and with the practical need to prevent and resolve disputes between people, then the Qurʾānic ruling will be understood to reflect social reality wisely and fairly. The eligibility of women to give legal testimony is clearly affirmed; requiring two women to testify in lieu of one man applies in relation to trans-actions women do not normally engage in, the idioms of which they would need to make an exceptional effort to understand. In most situations, the weight of testimony is not related to the witness being a man or woman; and in some, the woman's testi-mony is preferred over a man's. That is the known practice of, among others, the third and fourth caliphs, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, of renowned Companions like ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās (d. 68) and ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar (d. 73), and, from the generations after them, of widely followed scholars such as Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110), Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161), and Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150) and his students. All of them hold that the testimony of a single woman is enough in matters that normally concern women more than they do men.[1]

The difference between testimony and narration

Testimony is a kind of report that can result in establishing a definite liability for one or more particular individuals. Narration (*riwāyah*), by contrast, is a report of information that is not the basis of a definite, particular liability. Abū l-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474) says: 'The door of testimony is narrower; that is why being male and being free are considered in it.'[2]

Imām al-Qarāfī (d. 684) says in his book *al-Furūq* ('the Distinctions'):

I have begun with this distinction between these two fundamentals *(qāʿidah)*, since for eight years I had been searching to get hold of [the distinction], and was unable to do so. And I kept asking the scholars what the difference between the two is, and what the real meaning of

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[1]See *ibid.*, 145–55; AL-BŪṬĪ, *al-Marʾah*, 147–53. [2]Abū l-Walīd AL-BĀJĪ (d. 474), *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl fī aḥkām al-uṣūl*, i. 364.

each of them is, since both are a kind of reporting. [So it continued] until I studied *Sharḥ al-Burhān* of al-Māzarī [d. 536, who writes]: 'Testimony and narration are both reports; except if the report belongs to a general matter, not related to a specific individual, then it is a narration, like his saying – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – 'Actions go with [are valued by] the intentions'. [...] On the other hand, if a truthful person confirms to the judge that this individual owes to that individual one dinar, then this is binding to a definite [thing], not going beyond [the concerned parties] to anyone else. That is sheer testimony, while the former is sheer narration.'[1]

The commentator on *Musallam al-thubūt* observes:

The report of a reliable pious woman will be accepted without any endorsement by a man, in contrast to testimony, because the condition of being male has come with regard to testimony by the text [of the Qurʾān]. [...] This acceptance of the report narrated by a woman alone is in line with [the practice of] the Companions, may God be pleased with them, and they are enough to be followed. They accepted the report of Barīrah even before her emancipation, as they accepted the report of *umm al-muʾminīn*[2] ʿĀʾishah al-Ṣiddīqah, the report of *umm al-muʾminīn* Umm Salamah, and of others.'[3]

Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463), a famed authority on the principles of ḥadīth, explicitly confirms that point:

There is no dispute about the obligatoriness of accepting the report of those in whom are gathered all the qualities (*ṣifah*) required in a witness of the *ḥuqūq* [rights of one party on another] – like being Muslim, adult, of sound mind, accurate memory, truthfulness, honesty, piety, etc. So too there is no dispute [about] the same obligatoriness [of the conditions] for narrator and witness – sound mind, awareness and memory [etc.]. Where narrator and witness differ from each other is in the obligatoriness of the witness being a free person, not parent or

[1]AL-QARĀFĪ , *K. al-Furūq*, i. 74–76. [2]Lit. 'mother of the believers', an honorific title exclusive to the wives of the Prophet. [3]Mullā ʿAbd al-ʿAlī AL-ANṢĀRĪ (d. 1225), *Fawātiḥ al-raḥamūt* (his commentary on *Musallam al-thubūt* of Muḥibullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Shakūr [d. 1119], appended to al-Ghazālī's *al-Mustaṣfā*), i. 144.

descendant [of any party regarding whom the testimony is offered], not having any relation that leads to suspicion, not a close friend, and being a male in some types of testimony, and being two in some types of testimony, and being four in some others. And all that is not considered in the narrator. For we accept the report [narrated by] a slave, a woman and a friend, etc.'[1]

THE LAWFULNESS OF WOMEN RECEIVING AND NARRATING ḤADĪTH

The scholars are agreed that there is no difference between men and women in any type of narration, and that the two are alike in the right (and duty) to receive, hold and convey ḥadīth. The proofs for this are overwhelming and go back to the very first occasion that Islam was preached in public. We cannot be surprised by this, given that the study of ḥadīth is not an idle or leisure pursuit, but a means to understand the guidance of the Qurʾān and then implement it in personal life and in society. The lawfulness of receiving and transmitting ḥadīth is based on the duty of all Muslims to know their religion (*dīn*) and put it into practice: neither men nor women are exempted or excluded from this duty.

The first call to Islam is reported by Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab (d. *ca.* 90) and Abū Salamah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 94) from Abū Hurayrah (d. 57), who said:

When God sent down this verse [*al-Shuʿarā*, 26. 214], 'And warn your close kin', then the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – stood up and said: O people of Quraysh! Look to yourselves, I shall not avail you in anything against God. O children of ʿAbd Munāf! I shall not avail you in anything against God. O ʿAbbās, son of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib! I shall not avail you in anything against God. O Ṣafiyyah [aunt of God's Messenger]! I shall not avail you in anything against

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *al-Kifāyah*, 94. Here he is quoting, through Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydillāh al-MĀLIKĪ, the opinion of the qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib.

God. O Fāṭimah, daughter of Muḥammad! Ask me whatever you like of my wealth, but I cannot avail you in anything against God.[1]

The Prophet did not exclude the women from among the kindred he was commanded to warn first. Rather, he mentioned one man by name individually (his uncle), and two women by name individually (his aunt and daughter). It is also appropriate to recall that the very first person to hear and answer the call to Islam was the Prophet's wife, Khadījah. She strengthened his heart to carry the responsibility that God had laid upon him, and assured him of God's favour when he was anxious that he might prove unworthy and then be forsaken. It was she who led him to a learned relative of hers (a Christian monk), who also confirmed him to be the promised and chosen Messenger.

It is widely accepted that the rules of the disciplines that make up the science of ḥadīth did not begin to be formally written down until the end of the second century AH and after. Of course, the rules were not invented then; rather, scholars expressed in a systematic way what had long been established as good or best practice. This is analogous to how native users of a language know whether a phrase or sentence is correct or not; then, a quite different expertise is needed to work out the rules (the grammar) that native users are applying when they say that a particular usage is correct or incorrect.

We must affirm that, neither in the period of formally described and prescribed rules of the science of ḥadīth, nor in the generations of practice from which those rules derive, is a ḥadīth's being reported by a man a condition of its acceptability or its being reported by a woman a condition for its rejection. The Muʿtazilah, a sect of rationalists in the early period, were the strictest in their rules: they would not consider a ḥadīth as sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) unless it came from two independent narrators in every generation going back to the original speaker of the text being reported. However, not even the Muʿtazilīs required that the two narrators in each generation had to be male. In mainstream

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tafsīr*, bāb *wa-andhir ʿashīrata-ka l-aqrabīn*.

Islam, one of the greatest experts on the principles of the science (*uṣūl al-ḥadīth*) is Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643). He defines a ḥadīth as sound if it goes back to the Prophet through a solid, well-connected chain of narrators, each characterized as *ʿadl* and *ḍābiṭ* (just and truthful, with a strong memory). He defines as *shādhdh* (anomalous or aberrant) any report whose meaning does not fit with or corroborate other reports, of similar or related subject-matter, which are already established as sound. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ gives no weight whatever to whether a report was narrated by a male of female.[1]

Among specialists in the field what weighed most heavily in discussions about the soundness of particular ḥadīths, were the personal qualities of the narrators, male and female alike, and how well the links between the individuals in the chains of narration (*isnād*) could be verified. Naturally, some chains were preferred over others, and among the preferred those most appreciated on account of their reliability were referred to as 'golden chains'. Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn (d. 233) said: 'ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿUmar from Qāsim from ʿĀʾishah is a solid gold chain of narration.'[2] Several chains that begin with ʿĀʾishah are consistently described as among the best. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports

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[1]See IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 15, 26–27. Similar arguments can be found in other of the great specialists in ḥadīth sciences. See, for example: AL-NAWAWĪ (d. 676), *al-Taqrīb* with its commentary *al-Tadrīb*, i. 300–01. IBN RUSHAYQ AL-MĀLIKĪ (d. 632) discusses the acceptability of reports originating in a single narrator; among his examples of accepted narrators, the names of three women Companions head the list (*Lubāb al-maḥṣūl fī ʿilm al-uṣūl*, i. 356): 'They [the Companions and their successors] relied on the narration of a single person, like the narration of ʿĀʾishah, Ḥafṣah, Umm Salamah, Abū Hurayrah, Ibn ʿAbbās, Ibn ʿUmar, Abū Bakr, ʿUthmān and countless other people.' AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ discusses and illustrates at considerable length the qualities looked for in narrators: *al-Kifāyah*, 16–17, 52–77; he goes on to note (p. 84) that 'The scholars of the early generations accepted whatever has been narrated by women.' [2]AL-ḤĀKIM, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, 69, reporting from Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Salmān the jurist, from Jaʿfar ibn Abī ʿUthmān al-Ṭayālisī, from Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn.

that Wākīʿ ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 197) was once asked to indicate his preference among three of them: (1) Hishām ibn ʿUrwah from his father ʿUrwah from ʿĀʾishah; (2) Aflāḥ ibn Ḥumayd from al-Qāsim from ʿĀʾishah; (3) Sufyān from Manṣūr from Ibrāhīm from al-Aswad from ʿĀʾishah. He said: 'We do not consider anyone equal to the people of our city [Kufah]. Sufyān from Manṣūr from Ibrāhīm from al-Aswad from ʿĀʾishah is more beloved to me.' His own reason for this choice is that the narrators were based in Kufah and so he would have first-hand assurance of their quality. Also, more particularly, al-Aswad was famous for being exactingly meticulous about wording; for example, he reports from ʿĀʾishah that

God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – when he prayed in the night would come to his wife, then he would *lie down*. She did not say 'then he would sleep'. When the *muʾadhdhin* called [to prayer] he would *jump up*. She did not say, 'he would stand'. Then he would *pour [water] over himself*. She did not say 'he would bathe'.[1]

The experts have also praised Umm Salamah for the soundness and strength of the chains of narration from her. Al-Ḥākim reports that Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241), Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn and ʿAlī ibn al-Madinī (d. 234) gathered with a group of experts of ḥadīth and discussed the best of all good chains. 'One of them said: The best is Shuʿbah from Qatādah from Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab from Āmir the brother of Umm Salamah from Umm Salamah.'[2]

THE PUBLIC AUTHORITY OF ḤADĪTHS NARRATED BY WOMEN

As we have seen, the soundness of a ḥadīth was not in the least affected by whether a man narrated it or a woman. The importance of the question of the soundness of ḥadīths rests on the

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 174. However, Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd al-Dārimī (d. 253), following his teachers, preferred the first of these chains (AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiʿ*, ii. 299). [2] AL-ḤĀKIM, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, 68.

tendency of the Prophet's precepts and practice to become the foundation of legal rulings and social norms. On this question also, of the public authority of ḥadīths, the great imāms of the science, make no distinction on the basis of the narrator being a man or woman. Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204, as reported by Rabīʿ ibn Sulaymān) says:

Someone asked me: Define for me the least by which a proof will be affirmed on the scholars so the individual report can be proven over them. I said: The report of a single person from a single person until it reaches the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – or someone after him [e.g. a Companion]. The report of single [narrators] will not be proof until it gathers some things: that the narrator is reliable in his religion, well-known for truthfulness in his speech, [that] he [is one who] understands what he narrates, [that] he knows what can change the meaning of the ḥadīth, or is among those who transmit the hadith with its exact wording just as he heard it and does not transmit the meaning only. For if he narrates the meaning only and he is not aware of what changes the meaning, he will not know perhaps [but that] he may change lawful to unlawful. But if he narrates with exact wording then there will be no fear of [his unknowingly] changing the meaning. He should know his ḥadīth by heart if he is narrating [it] from memory. And he should preserve his writings well if he is narrating from writing [in notes or a book]. And if he shares ḥadīth [in common] with [others] who are known for being accurate, his ḥadīth should corroborate their ḥadīth. He should not be a *muddallis* – [i.e.] narrating from those whom he has [really] met what he has not [really] heard from them – and he should not be [one who ventures to go around] narrating from the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – what goes against the ḥadīth of people [with an established reputation as] reliable.[1]

We can illustrate the point with some examples which show that women's ḥadīths were accepted (or not) as the basis of legal rulings, following the normal methods, and not because the narrators happened to be women.

Imām Mālik (d. 179) narrates from Saʿd ibn Isḥāq ibn Kaʿb ibn ʿUjrah, from his paternal aunt Zaynab bint Kaʿb ibn ʿUjrah

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 23–24.

that Furayʿah bint Mālik ibn Sīnān, sister of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, told her that she came to God's Messenger for permission to return to her parents' family home in the quarter of Banū Khudrah. She explained that her husband had gone out in search of his slaves who had run away, until they reached the side of Qadūm, where he caught up with them and they killed him:

So I asked God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – to go to my family, because my husband did not leave for me any residence that he owned, and no [means with which to defray my] expenses. God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: Yes. She said: I moved away until when I was [still] in the room or in the Mosque he called me [back] or asked someone to call me [back]. I came back. He asked: What did you say? I repeated to him the story of my husband's murder. Then the Prophet said: Stay in your house until the waiting period (*ʿiddah*) passes.
She said: I stayed there for the whole waiting period, four months and ten days.
She says: When ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān was [the caliph] he called me and asked me about that. I told him. Then he followed it and judged accordingly.[1]

ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān, one of the four rightly-guided caliphs, ruled at a time when there were many male Companions. Yet he sought knowledge from a woman, she informed him and he judged accordingly. Had the report of a woman not been considered sufficient as a proof on which to base a ruling, he would not and could not have judged according to it. That she was a woman was not considered relevant. Similarly when a report was rejected as the basis for a ruling, the narrator's being a woman was not a relevant factor. Imām al-Shawkānī (d. 1255) says: 'It has not been narrated from any scholar that he rejected the report of a woman on the ground of her being female. There are plenty of *sunnah*s accepted by the *ummah* and they are [based on] the narration of a single female Companion. No-one

[1]ABŪ DĀWŪD (d. 275), *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *fī l-mutwaffā ʿan-hā tantaqil.*
[2]AL-SHAWKĀNĪ, *Nayl al-awṭār*, viii. 22.

who has acquired a bit of knowledge of the *Sunnah* can deny this.'[2]

This is well exemplified in the case of the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports that ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb would not act on her report 'though she was a Muslim and on the straight path because her report was opposed to the Qurʾān'. ' ʿUmar said: We are not to leave the Book of our Lord and *Sunnah* of our Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – for the word of a woman [when] we do not know [for certain] whether she preserved [the matter fully] or not.'[1] Now ʿUmar refused to give a ruling on the basis of Fāṭimah's ḥadīth for the good reason that it contradicted the Qurʾān. Even so, though he (and others) might have wished that she would stop narrating this ḥadīth, he did not try to prevent her from doing so. What happened with this ḥadīth illustrates the respect accorded to women in the society of that time, the authority they enjoyed, and strong belief in the principle that neither men or women could be prevented from acquiring and transmitting their knowledge and understanding of the religion – not even if someone of the stature of ʿUmar was opposed. So, despite ʿUmar's refusal to act on it and, more importantly, despite the very strong argument against it (i.e. its apparent opposition to the Qurʾān), people continued to record it in their books, and to discuss it.[2]

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 83. See also AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-muṭallaqah thalāthan lā suknā la-hā wa-lā nafaqah* '[The famous Kufan jurist Mughīrah] says: I mentioned the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah to Ibrāhim al-Nakhaʿī, who then said that 'Umar said: We will not leave the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of our Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – for the ḥadīth of a woman, [about which] we do not know if she remembered or forgot [something related to it].'

[2] Among those who have included Fāṭimah's ḥadīth in their books are: MĀLIK, *Muwaṭṭā*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī nafaqat al-muṭallaqah*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *al-muṭallaqah thalāthan lā nafaqah la-hā*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *fī nafaqat al-mabtūtah*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī an lā yakhaṭuba al-rajul ʿalā khiṭbah akihī-hi*; bāb *al-rukhṣah fī khurūj al-mabtūtah min bayti-hā fī ʿiddati-hā*, bāb *nafaqat al-bāʾinah*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *al-muṭallaqah thalāthan hal la-hā suknā wa-*

Indeed, respect for the ḥadīth was such that, once accepted as *ṣaḥīḥ* by the normal conventions, some scholars and jurists felt obliged to reconcile it somehow with the Qurʾān.

The ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays

The meaning of Fāṭimah's ḥadīth is that a divorced woman has no right of accommodation and living expenses from her former husband during the *ʿiddah*, the waiting period before the end of which she cannot re-marry. Fāṭimah bint Qays reports that her husband Abū ʿAmr ibn Ḥafṣ divorced her finally while away from home; he sent his agent to her with some barley to provide her expenses. She did not like this. He then said: 'By God you do not have any right upon us.' She came to God's Messenger, and recounted the matter to him. 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: Your expenses are not [an obligation] on him.'

ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Zayd ibn Thābit, ʿĀʾishah and other jurists among the Companions held that a divorced woman has right of accommodation and expenses, whether the divorce is final or provisional, and whether she is pregnant or not. This is the view also of later scholars and jurists – Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Abū Ḥanīfah and his students, and the rest of the people of Kufah. Their view is based on the following verses of the Qurʾān (*al-Ṭalāq*, 65. 1, 6):

O Prophet! When you [men] divorce women, divorce them for their ʿiddah, and count their ʿiddah [accurately] and be wary of God, your Lord. Do not force them from their homes, nor should they leave [of their own accord], except in case of blatant indecency (fāḥishah). And those are the bounds of God. [...] You [the one divorcing his wife] do not know – it may be that God will later bring about some new affair [i.e. some reconciliation or eventual re-marriage]. [... ...] Lodge them [divorced wives] where you dwell, according to your means, and do not be hurtful to

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nafaqah; IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, Musnad al-nisāʾ*; IBN ABĪ SHAYBAH, *Muṣannaf, Ṭalāq*, bāb *man qāla idhā ṭallaqa-ha thalāthan laysa la-hā nafaqah*; Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, *Sunan*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-munākaḥah*; AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ, in *Sharḥ Maʿānī al-āthār*, iii. 64–73; and many others with different chains of narrations.

them so that you constrain them [forcing them to leave]. And if they are pregnant, then spend on them till they deliver their burdens. Then if they breast-feed the children for you, give them their due payment, and consult each other in the normal way (bi-l-maʿrūf). [...]

– with further support from the ḥadīth mentioned earlier of Furayʿah bint Mālik, in which she is required to remain in her former husband's home during her *ʿiddah*.

Some Companions criticized Fāṭimah for narrating the ḥadīth. ʿĀʾishah did so,[1] and explained that the ruling for Fāṭimah was because of some danger for her in staying at her ex-husband's home, with her in-laws.[2] Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab says: 'Fāṭimah was moved from her house because of her quarrelling with her in-laws.'[3] But she continued narrating the ḥadīth, which left an impact on later jurisprudence. Some jurists tried to make it fit with the Qurʾān. They said that the verse of the Qurʾān is referring to a woman divorced provisionally, while Fāṭimah's ḥadīth is about a woman divorced finally. That is the opinion of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, ʿAṭā ibn Abī Rabaḥ, Āmir al-Shaʿbī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Isḥāq ibn Rāhawayh.[4] Others held that the divorcee has the right of accommodation by the Qurʾānic verse, but by Fāṭimah's ḥadīth not the right of maintenance. That is the opinion of Mālik ibn Anas, Layth ibn Saʿd and al-Shāfiʿī. Other jurists derived other, different rulings from the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah. For a summary and more references see Table 1.

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[1]al-Qāsim narrated from ʿĀʾishah: 'What is it with Fāṭimah? Does she not fear God in narrating this ḥadīth?' AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *man ankara dhālika ʿalā Fāṭimah*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *al-muṭallaqah thalāthan lā nafaqah la-hā*. See also AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ, *Sharḥ Maʿānī al-āthār*, iii. 68. [2]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *man ankara dhālika ʿalā Fāṭimah*. [3]*Ibid*; AL-BAYHAQĪ, *Sunan*, *Nafaqāt*, bāb *al-mabtūtah lā nafaqah la-hā*. [4]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-muṭallaqah thalāthan lā suknā la-hā wa-lā nafaqah*. Hushaym narrates from Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid (*ʿAwn al-maʿbūd* commenting on the ḥadīth in *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*) that Shaʿbī said about ʿUmar's saying he was uncertain whether Fāṭimah 'remembered or forgot' some bit of wording or of context relevant to understanding the matter: 'A woman of Quraysh, known for her intelligence and wisdom, will forget a verdict that goes against her [interests]?!'.

hadīth narrated by	compilations recorded in [b. = bāb]	juristic positions	position held by	major works recording the controversy
ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿUtbah ibn Masʿūd; Abū Salamah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf; ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr; ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī; ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿĀṣim ibn Thābit; Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Thawbān; Abū Bakr ibn Abī l-Jahm ibn Ṣukhayr al-ʿAdawī; ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Abī ʿAmr ibn al-Ḥafṣ; Tamīm, *mawlā* of Fāṭimah; al-Bahī	al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *qiṣṣah Fāṭimah bint Qays*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *al-muṭallaqah thalāthan lā nafaqata lahā*; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *fī nafaqat al-mabtūtah* al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmiʿ*, *Nikāḥ*, b. *mā jāʾa fī an lā yakhṭiba al-rajul ʿalā....*; al-Nasaʾī, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *al-rukhṣah fī khurūj al-mabtūtah min baytihā fī ʿiddatihā*, b. *nafaqat al-bāʾinah*; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *al-muṭallaqah thalāthan hal la-hā suknā wa nafaqah*; al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *fī l-muṭallaqah thalāthan a-la-hā l-suknā wa-l-nafaqah am lā*; Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, *musnad al-nisāʾ*; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *Muṣannaf*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *man qāla idhā ṭallaqahā thalāthan laysa la-hā nafaqah*, b. *man rakkaṣa li l-muṭallaqah an taʿtadda fī ghayri bayti-hā*; Saʿīd ibn Manṣūr, *Sunan*, b. *mā jāʾa fī l-munākaḥah* Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Maʿānī al-āthār*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *al-muṭallaqah ṭalāqan bāʾinan mādhā la-hā ʿalā zawjihā fī ʿiddati-hā*; Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṭalāq*, b. *al-ʿiddah*; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, iv. 61–62; al-Dāraquṭnī, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*	she has right of neither accommodation nor expenses	ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110), ʿIkrimah, ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114), ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī, Isḥāq ibn Rāhawayh, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241)	Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa*, *Ṭalāq*, b. *mā jāʾa fī nafaqat al-muṭallaqah* al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, abwāb *mutafarriqah fī al-nikāḥ wa-l-ṭalāq wa ghayri-himā* Ibn al-Qāsim (d. 191), *al-Mudawwanah*, *Ṭalāq al-sunnah*, *nafaqat al-muṭallaqah wa suknā-hā* Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥallā*, *Ṭalāq* al-Sarakhsī, *al-Mabsūṭ*, *Nikāḥ*, b. *al-nafaqah fī l-ṭalāq wa-l-furqah wa al-zawjiyyyah* al-Kāsānī, *Badaʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ*, iv. 448 al-Marghīnānī, *al-Hidayah*, *Ṭalāq* Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-mujtahid*, b. *al-ʿiddah* al-Nawawī, *al-Majmūʿ Sharḥ al-muhadhdhab*, xviii. 164 Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Mughnī*, *Ṭalāq* Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn*, *fatāwā fī nafaqat muʿtaddah wa kiswati-hā*; *Zād al-Maʿād*, v. 522–42
		she has right of accommodation but not of expenses	ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr, Mālik ibn Anas (d. 179), Layth ibn Saʿd (d. 175), al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204)	
		she has right of both accommodation and expenses	ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Usāmah ibn Zayd, al-Aswad ibn Yazīd, Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī	

Table 1. The right to disagree: different juristic responses to the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays that an ex-husband is not obliged to provide expenses and accommodation for the divorced wife during the *ʿiddah* (waiting period)

Another example: a ḥadīth from ʿĀʾishah

This second example concerns a legal effect of breast-feeding. A wet-nurse is prohibited in marriage to the one who has been breast-fed by her, just as his natural mother would be, which in turn means that the restrictions on how the two meet are relaxed. ʿĀʾishah narrated that Sālim, the slave of Abū Ḥudhayfah, lived with him in his house. Abū Ḥudhayfah's wife, the daughter of Suhayl came to the Prophet and said: 'Sālim has attained manhood and he enters in our house and I feel that my husband is not at ease about this. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said to her: Give your milk to [Sālim], then you will become unlawful for him and then Abū Ḥudhayfah will be at ease.' The daughter of Suhayl, reports that she did so and that her husband was then at ease about his being in the house.[1]

On the basis of this ḥadīth ʿĀʾishah held that if a woman gave her milk to an adult, it would then be as if she had been his wet-nurse, with the legal effect as explained above. She was opposed by others among the Companions, including other wives of the Prophet, and by the imāms of the later generations – Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and others – because of the Qurʾānic verse (*al-Baqarah*, 2. 233):

The mothers shall breast-feed their children for two whole years, [that is] for those [parents] who desire to complete the breast-feeding.

Those who opposed ʿĀʾishah also relied on a number of ḥadīths. For example, the Prophet's saying: 'Breast-feeding is out of hunger.'[2] This means that only that is to be considered breast-feeding which satisfies hunger, namely in early infancy before the child turns to solid foods. When the child reaches the age when milk does not satisfy his hunger, then foster-mother relationship is not established with that child, and the

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Raḍāʿ*, bāb *raḍāʿat al-kabīr.* [2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *man qāla: lā radaʿah baʿda ḥawlayn*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Raḍāʿ*, bāb *innamā al-raḍāʿah min al-majāʿah.*

legal effects of that relationship do not apply.[1] Ibn Masʿūd has narrated something similar.[2] ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr has narrated from the Prophet: 'There is no breast-feeding but what enters into the intestines.'[3] Fāṭimah bint al-Mundhir has narrated from Umm Salamah that the Prophet said: 'Only that breast-feeding forbids [marriage] which becomes a part of the intestines and happens before the age of weaning.'[4] After citing that ḥadīth, al-Tirmidhī says:

Most scholars from among the Companions of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – and others hold the opinion that breast-feeding only forbids [marriage] if it is within two years [after birth] and what is after the full two years it does not forbid anything.

Abū ʿUbaydah ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Zamʿah narrated that his mother Zaynab bint Abī Salamah told him that her mother Umm Salamah, the wife of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – used to say: All wives of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – refused to allow anyone to enter upon them by that breast-feeding [which ʿĀʾishah allowed] and they said to ʿĀʾishah: That was a permission particular to the wife of Abū Ḥudhayfah, and no one can enter upon us by such breast-feeding and see us.[7]

Despite the opposition to it, ʿĀʾishah continued to narrate the ḥadīth and be guided by it, and the jurists did not see any harm in citing it. Ibn Abī Mulaykah has reported that Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr told that ḥadīth of ʿĀʾishah to him. He adds: 'I endured one year or about one year not narrating this ḥadīth to anyone and I was afraid of [doing so]. Then I met Qāsim and I said to him: You narrated to me a ḥadīth which I could not [dare to] narrate to anyone. Qāsim said: What is that? I told him. He said: You can narrate it from me that ʿĀʾishah narrated it to me.'[8]

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[1]See AL-BAGHAWĪ (d. 494) *Sharḥ al-Sunnah*, v. 65. [2]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *fī raḍāʿat al-kabīr*. [3]IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *lā raḍāʿah baʿda fiṣāl*. [4]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Raḍāʿ*, bāb *mā dhukira anna l-raḍaʿah lā tuḥarrim illā fī l-ṣighar dūn al-ḥawlayn*. [7]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Raḍaʿ*, bāb *raḍaʿat al-kabir*. [8]*Ibid.*

Three important points can be drawn from the foregoing discussion: (1) In the time of the Companions the desire to understand and implement the *dīn* was stronger than anything else, before there was any established division by doctrine, sect or political faction. The people did not suffer from loyalties competing with loyalty to Qurʾān and *Sunnah*, and so they were able to differ without dividing, to disagree on particular matters without loss of mutual respect and solidarity.

(2) Where there was discussion of how to understand and implement ḥadīths, the weight given to someone's knowledge or understanding was not a function of the individual's being a man or woman. If a broad consensus accrued around one understanding rather than another, it was not on account of so-called 'patriarchal attitudes'. The historical evidence will not sustain the view that the learned Companions or their Successors or the jurists and scholars who were followed (i.e. imāms) after them interpreted the guidance of Qurʾān and *Sunnah*, consciously or unconsciously, to serve vested interests of political, economic or gender privilege.

(3) The material, on the basis of which decisions were taken and directions given about how to live by the guidance, was in the public domain: people were required to bring it and keep it in public. The seniority of some Companions, the positions of power some had risen to, the fact that some had been specially close to the Prophet by relationship of birth or marriage, did not enable them to prevent the circulation of material or of interpretations that they opposed. The greater authority some enjoyed was not mysterious or charismatic; it derived from strictly known and demonstrable qualities: breadth and depth of knowledge, intelligence and understanding, combined with firm belief, God-wariness and righteousness. From the examples given thus far, in the text or the notes, it should be clear that Muslim scholars took great pains to record as much as they could of this material, how it passed from whom to whom, who agreed with one interpretation or another, and who disagreed and why. In the next chapters we shall see how the women of the *ummah* were included in this scholarly activity.

Chapter 2

Women as seekers and students of ḥadīth

We have seen that the Law places no formal impediment in the way of women acquiring the knowledge to understand and practise Islam. Rather, it is a duty for them to do so, just as it is for the men. But a law, whether it permits or forbids, while it has educative force, does not suffice by itself to enable the intended outcome. Also needed, alongside the law, is a wider societal effort to establish an ethos that welcomes and enables what the law intends. In the first part of this chapter I review how women were urged, from the outset of Islam, to learn the religion, and how that example was sustained in the period that followed, by the caliphs and other rulers, by the ulema and the men and women who enjoyed authority. It was sustained also by the dedication of the women themselves to the task, to travelling in the path of knowledge, to overcoming shyness. In the second part I set out the ways in which women acquired the necessary skills to preserve 'the knowledge', by committing ḥadīth to memory, then to writing.

THE DISPOSITION TO TEACH WOMEN

The duty to teach

The Prophet's primary role was not as law-giver or ruler but as a teacher of the *dīn* – law and rule were as means to that end:

He it is Who has sent among the unscriptured (ummiyyūn) a Messenger from among them, reciting to them His verses, purifying them, and teaching them the Scripture (kitāb) and the Wisdom (ḥikmah). And before [that] they had certainly been in manifest error. (*al-Jumuʿah*, 62. 2)

The duty of embodying Islam as a way of life entailed life-long sacrifice for the Messenger himself and for his household. The Qurʾān alludes delicately (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33. 28–29) to the occasion when, within that household, there was ill-feeling, perhaps reluctance to go on enduring hardship, perhaps desire for recompense in the form of present advantage or privilege. So 'the choice' was put to the wives of the Prophet – either him with hardship and the supreme recompense hereafter, or parting from him with some goods of this world. In the narration of Jābir, the Prophet first put 'the choice' to ʿĀʾishah, advising her not to decide hastily but to take counsel with her parent:

She said: Will I consult my parent about you, O Messenger of God? Rather, I choose God, His Messenger and the hereafter, and I ask you not to inform any of your wives about what I have said. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: No-one among them will ask me but I will tell her. God has not sent me as *muʿannit* [who makes it hard for people] or as *mutaʿamit* [who lets others fall into error]. Rather, He has sent me to teach [people] and to make [the straight way] easy [for them].[1]

We do not know what ʿĀʾishah had in mind in asking what she did; but we do know his motive for refusing her because he states it himself – he was bound by his primary duty as teacher to communicate to people whatever would help them to choose the right path.

Educating the children

The first stage of teaching is the upbringing of children. An essential condition of doing that well is to respect and love the children, girls as well as boys. It required some effort to change attitudes that had become deeply ingrained. God's Messenger said: 'God has disliked three things from you: being disobedient to mothers, burying [infant] girls alive, and the habit of taking and not giving.'[2] ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, eminent Companion and son

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[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *bayān anna takhyīr imraʾati-hi lā yakūn ṭalāqan illā baʿd al-niyyah.* [2] AL-ṬABARĀNĪ, cited in AL-HAYTHAMĪ (d. 807), *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, viii. 270.

of the second caliph, heard a man wishing his daughters dead, perhaps because he was worried about the economic burden. Ibn ʿUmar was angered and said: 'Is it you who provide their provision?'[1] ʿUqbah ibn ʿĀmir (d. *ca.* 60) narrates that the Messenger of God said: 'Do not be averse to daughters. For they are precious treasures that comfort your heart.'[2] ʿĀʾishah narrates that he said: 'Whoever is tested with anything of these girls – they will be his screen from the Fire.'[3] Anas ibn Mālik narrates that the Messenger said: 'Whoever brings up two girls until they become adult, he and I will come close to one other like this' and he brought his fingers together to indicate closeness.[4] Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (d. 63) narrates that he said: 'Whoever has three daughters or three sisters or two daughters or two sisters and then he is good company for them and is wary of God in regard to them, he will have paradise.'[5] The Prophet's teaching was remembered by his community: Ṣāliḥ ibn Aḥmad, son of the great *muḥaddith* and jurist said: 'Whenever my father Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal had a daughter born to him, he would say: The prophets, upon them be peace, were the fathers of daughters. And he would say: About the daughters there has come [in the ḥadīths] the reward that is known.'[6]

The *Sunnah* is particular about treating sons and daughters equally. Al-Bazzār (d. 292) has cited the ḥadīth from Anas ibn Mālik that there was with the Prophet a man whose son came to him: the man kissed the boy and sat him on his lap. Then his daughter came and he sat her in front of him. 'God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said to the man: Why did you not treat them equally?'[7]

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, i. 158. [2]AL-HAYTHAMĪ, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, viii. 286. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāh*, bāb *ittaqū l-nār*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Birr*, bāb *faḍl al-iḥsān alā l-banāt.* [4]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Birr*, bāb *faḍl al-iḥsān alā l-banāt.* [5]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Birr*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-nafaqah ʿalā l-banāt wa-l-akhawāt.* [6]Muḥammad Nūr ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ SUWAYD, *Manhaj al-tarbiyah al-nabawiyyah li-l-ṭifl*, 324. [7]AL-HAYTHAMĪ, *Majmaʿ al-zawāʾid*, viii. 286–87.

The Prophet emphasized the need to fix in the hearts of the children, from as early an age as possible, a love for the *dīn*. He himself did this by engaging with them, playing with them, and involving them in his practice of it. The ḥadīths that record his affection for Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, his grandsons, when they were infants, and how he would keep them by him even while doing the prayer, are widely known. Here it is fitting that we recall the ḥadīths that show the same care and concern for girls.

Khālid ibn Saʿīd narrates from his father, from Umm Khālid bint Khālid ibn Saʿīd, who had lived for a time in Abyssinia, that she said: 'I came to God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – with my father. I was wearing a yellow dress. The Messenger of God said: *Sanah, sanah*, which in the tongue of the Abyssinians meant, Nice, nice. She says: Then I started playing with the seal of prophethood on his shoulder. My father rebuked me [for that. But] the Messenger of God said: Let her be. Then he prayed for her dress to last a long time. It did last for a long time.'[1]

Abū Qatādah (d. 54) narrates how they were sitting before the door of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*, when he came out carrying his granddaughter, Umāmah bint Abī l-Āṣ ibn al-Rabīʿ, the daughter of his daughter Zaynab. She was then a little child. The Prophet led the prayer keeping her on his shoulder – he would set her on the ground when bowing, then put her back on his shoulder as he got up: 'He went on doing this until he finished his prayer.'[2]

The Prophet did not forbid women from bringing their children and nursing babies to the mosques. Rather, their being there was expected and he would shorten his prayer out of consideration for the children and for their mothers' need to attend them. Thābit al-Bunānī narrates from Anas ibn Mālik that he said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-*

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Adab*, bāb *man taraka ṣabiyyata ghayri-hi ḥattā talʿaba bi-hi aw qabbala-hā aw mazaḥa-hā*. [2] IBN SAʿD (d. 230), *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 39.

sallam – would hear the cry of a child with his mother during the prayer. Then he would recite the light sūrah[s] – or [the narrator] said the short sūrah[s].'[1] Qatādah (d. 118) narrated, also from Anas, that he said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: I enter upon the prayer meaning to make it long then I hear the crying of a baby and I lighten the prayer for [the sake of] the child's mother's yearning [to attend to the baby].'[1]

Keeping children on the Sunnah

Parents used to train their children from an early age to adhere to the *sunnah*s of the Prophet. Khālid ibn Dhakwān (*tābiʿī*) narrated from Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh (d. *ca.* 70) that she said: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – sent his messenger on the morning of ʿĀshūrā to the houses of the Anṣār saying: Whoever started [the day] not fasting, he should complete the day [not fasting], and whoever started [the day] fasting he should fast. She says: Then after that we used to fast that day and make our children fast that day, and make woollen toys so when any of them cried for food, we would give him [the toys]; so they would be busy with them until the time of breaking the fast.'[2] Fasting on the day of ʿĀshūrā is not compulsory, but the believers were keen to encourage their children to grow in piety. As for fasting in Ramaḍān, children used to do it regularly. ʿUmar said to someone who was not fasting in Ramaḍān: 'Woe to you! even our children are fasting.'[2]

The Prophet said: 'That the father teaches good manners (*yuʿaddib*) to his child is surely better for him than giving charity of a *ṣāʿ* in the path of God.'[3]

The reason for disciplining children is to correct them, not to hurt. The aim, that the child acquire the authority to command him or herself to do what is right, cannot be realized if

[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *amr al-aʾimmah bi-takhfīf al-ṣalāh fī tamām*. [2] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Sawm*, bāb *sawm al-ṣibyān*. [3] AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *al-Birr wa-l-ṣilah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī adab al-walad*.

parents use words or blows in an uncontrolled way, to hurt the child or to relieve anger and frustration at being thwarted. The great jurist al-Kāsānī (d. 587) says: 'The child is to be rebuked (*ʿazzara*) to teach [him] manners, not to punish; because it is in the capacity of teaching manners [that it has been permitted]. Do you not see what is narrated from the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – that he said: Command your children to pray when they are seven, and strike them for that when they are ten.'[1]

Encouraging girls and women to attend gatherings

The Prophet commanded girls and adult women, even those in a state of impurity, to attend those occasions of public assembly where knowledge of the religion would be presented. He did not recognize as an excuse that some poor women did not have a *jilbāb* (loose over-garment) to put on when going out. Umm ʿAṭiyyah al-Anṣāriyyah narrates:

The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – commanded us to bring them out on *[ʿĪd] al-fitr* and *[ʿĪd] al-aḍḥā* – adult girls, adolescents, and those kept secluded (*ḥuyyaḍ dhawāt al-khudūr*). As for those in impurity, they were to leave the prayer but attend the good and the supplication of the Muslims. I said: O Messenger of God, if someone does not have *jilbāb*? He said: Then her sister will lend her *jilbāb* to her.[2]

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, the Prophet's cousin, narrates that, the Prophet used to command his wives and daughters to go out to attend both ʿĪds.[3] They already had ample opportunity to learn from him directly; the reason he did this was to establish

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[1]AL-KĀSĀNĪ (d. 587), *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ*, vii. 63. [2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *shuhūd al-ḥāʾiḍ al-ʿidayn wa daʿwat al-muslimīn.* AL-BAGHAWĪ says about this ḥadīth (*Sharḥ al-sunnah*, ii. 611): 'It holds evidence that a woman during her monthly period should not abandon remembrance of God, places of good, and assemblies of knowledge.' [3]IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Abwāb iqāmat al-ṣalah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī khurūj al-nisāʾ fī l-ʿīdayn.*

the *sunnah* by implementing it in his own household – that was his customary way of teaching his community.

The duty to answer the women's questions

It is obligatory for any teacher who follows the example of God's Messenger that he listen attentively to the questions put to him and answer them in a way that meets the questioner's need. Anas ibn Mālik narrates that a woman with some mental disability wanted to put some matter to the Prophet but did not want anyone else to know of it. Anas reports that the Prophet said to her: 'O mother of so-and-so, suggest some street that you like so that I can respond to your need there.' So he answered her question in a public space, yet privately.[1] Al-Nawawī (d. 676) comments:

This ḥadīth informs [us] of the humility of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – that he would stand even with a weak-minded woman to [hear and] answer her question and solve her problem in privacy. That [way that he demonstrated] is not the forbidden [kind of] privacy with a woman stranger because this was in a thoroughfare of the people where they could see him and her, but could not hear her speaking. For her question was about a matter such as could not be revealed.[2]

Generally both men and women attended the Prophet's teaching in the mosque and other places. That is why we have many ḥadīths which record, through the narration of both men and women, the same *sunnah*s. However, on the occasions when men were present, the women were shy to raise matters that concerned them particularly. For such matters, a few women were able to call upon him at his house. To satisfy those who were thus left out, he was asked to set aside a day specifically for them. Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī says: 'The women asked the Prophet

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Faḍāʾil*, bāb *qurb al-nabī ʿalay-hi l-salām min al-nās wa tabarruki-him bi-hi.* [2]AL-NAWAWĪ, *Sharḥ ʿalā Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (commenting *in loco* on the ḥadīth cited in the preceding note). [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *ʿIlm*, bāb *hal yajʿalu li-l-nisāʾ yawman ʿalā ḥidah.*

– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – to make a specific day for them. Then the Prophet promised them a day on which he met them and then preached to and instructed them.'[3]

Sometimes the Prophet would teach using analogy so that the listener could grasp the reasoning supporting the ruling. For example, Ibn ʿAbbās has narrated that a woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Prophet and said:

My mother vowed to God to do ḥajj, but she was not able to do ḥajj before she died. Should I do ḥajj on her behalf? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: Yes. Consider, if your mother had a debt, would you not pay it back? So pay the debt to God. A debt to God deserves the most to be paid.[1]

About certain matters, people are shy of being explicit. The Prophet would answer using delicate hints that an alert, intelligent listener could understand. It is narrated from ʿĀʾishah that Asmāʾ bint Shakal asked about the bathing at the end of the menstrual period. He said:

The woman should take water and leaves of the lote tree and clean nicely, then pour water over her head, rubbing vigorously so that she reaches to the roots of her hair. Then she should pour water over herself. Then she should take a piece of cloth perfumed with musk and clean with it. Asmāʾ asked: How will she clean with it? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: *Subḥān al-lāh!* [2] You will clean with it. Then ʿĀʾishah said to her in a subdued voice: Follow the traces of blood.[3]

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *abwāb al-iḥṣār wa jazāʾ al-ṣayd*, bāb *al-ḥajj wa-l-nudhūr ʿan al-mayyit wa-l-rajul yaḥujju ʿan al-marʾah*. [2]This phrase (roughly 'Glory be to God') serves as a common exclamation to mark the moment when Muslims recognize a matter as being beyond their capacity to influence. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *dalk al-marʾah nafsa-hā*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *istībāb istiʿmāl al-mughtasilah min al-ḥayḍ firṣah min mask fī mawḍiʿ al-dam*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-ightisāl min al-maḥīḍ*; AL-NASAʾĪ , *Sunan*, bāb *dhikr al-ʿamal fī ghasl al-maḥīḍ*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-ḥāʾiḍ kayfa taghtasil*.

The practice of those who followed

With the ending of prophethood, the learned among the community, took up the duty of teaching 'the Book and the Wisdom' because obedience to God cannot be well established without knowledge. The scholars urged the rulers to specify days for the teaching of women on the basis of what has been narrated from Ibn Jurayj, from ʿAṭāʾ that Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh said: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – stood up on the day of *ʿĪd al-fiṭr* and did the prayer. He began with the prayer, then gave the *khuṭbah*. When he finished, he came down, then [came] to the women where, while leaning on the hand of Bilāl, he [preached to them and] reminded them.' Ibn Jurayj asked ʿAṭāʾ: 'Do you think it is incumbent on the imām that he [preach to and] remind the women? ʿAṭāʾ said: 'Surely it is incumbent on them. And why do not they do that?'[1] He meant that it is not something special for the Prophet.

Because of the concern among conscientious Muslims to follow the *Sunnah*, people generally concerned themselves to educate women in it. So the women carried and transmitted knowledge, as the men did, and among them were many who, being guided themselves, were able to guide others, to open the ways to good, and close the doors to evil. Knowledge is among the very best of the acts of obedience; the most learned scholar, Umm al-Dardāʾ (d. 81) said: 'I have sought worship in everything. I did not find anything more relieving to me than sitting with scholars and exchanging [knowledge] with them.'[2]

After explaining in detail what is incumbent on guardians regarding the education of dependants, Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737) said: 'The scholar should free himself to teach these commands (*aḥkām*) to the elders and the young, male and female. God says [and then he cites the whole of the verse, cited above pp. 4–5 (*al-Aḥzāb*, 33. 35): *The muslim men and muslim women... God has prepared for them*

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *ʿĪdayn*, bāb *al-mashy wa-l-rukūb ilā l-ʿīd...* [2] Abū ʿUbaydah MASHHŪR ibn Ḥasan Āl Salamān, *ʿInāyat al-nisāʾ bi-l-ḥadīth al-nabawī*, 13.

forgiveness and a great reward]. The Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*, said: The women are pairs of the men. So husband and wife and male and female slave are equal in respect of their good qualities. The people of the early generation (*salaf*) were firm on this path. You will find that their children and their male and female slaves in most of their matters share in all these virtues [listed in the verse].'[1]

The biographical sources are full of examples of women whose fathers took care to teach them ḥadīth and other subjects. The Companions and, after them, the Successors were most particular in this. Among the latter, for example, Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab taught all his ḥadīths to his daughter; in the next generation, Mālik ibn Anas taught his daughter the whole of his *Muwaṭṭā*. Later still, Abū Ḥanīfah, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and indeed some scholars in every generation, attended with care to the education of their children. A few examples:

Under the care of her father, the qāḍī Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Kāmil ibn Khalaf ibn Shajarah al-Baghdādī (d. 350), student of the famous historian and Qurʾān commentator, Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310), the *muḥaddithah* Amat al-Salām, Umm al-Fatḥ (d. 390) heard ḥadīths from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Baṣlānī and Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Ḥumayd ibn al-Rabīʿ (both early 4th c.). Al-ʿAtīqī (d. 441) confirms this and notes: 'Her hearing ḥadīth is recorded in her father's handwriting.'[2]

Shaykh al-Islām Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Maghribī al-Fāsī (d. 560), known as Ibn al-Ḥuṭayʾah, taught his daughter the seven recitations of the Qurʾān, the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim and other books of ḥadīth. She wrote down a great number of ḥadīths and studied extensively with her father, yet it is recorded that somehow he never got to see her. When Shujāʿ, one of the narrators was asked about this, he explained that it began by chance while she was a baby: he would be busy teaching until sunset by which time she would be asleep. This

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[1] IBN AL-ḤĀJJ, *al-Madkhal*, ii. 215, cited in *ibid.*, 22. [2] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 444.

somehow carried on until she had grown up, married and gone to her own house. Imām al-Dhahabī comments on this severely: 'There is no praise in something like this; rather the *Sunnah* is the opposite of it. For the master of mankind – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam* – used to carry his granddaughter Umāmah, while he did the prayer.'[1]

Another example is what has come in the preface of *Kitāb al-Muʿallimīn* of Ibn Saḥnūn (d. 256): 'The pious qāḍī ʿĪsā ibn Miskīn used to teach his daughters and granddaughters. Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ [d. 544] says: 'After the *ʿaṣr* prayer he would call his two daughters and the daughters of his brother to teach them the Qurʾān and the knowledge. The same was done before him by Asad ibn al-Furāt, the conqueror of Sicily, with his daughter Asmāʾ who attained a high degree in knowledge.'[2]

Some scholars ensured that their daughters' interest in ḥadīth and other branches of knowledge would continue by marrying them to other scholars. For example Shaykh al-Qurrāʾ, Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn Abī l-Qāsim al-Andalusī (d. 496) first taught his daughter himself, then took her to his teachers from whom she heard their ḥadīths directly. When she completed her education, he married her to one of his more knowledgeable students. Ibn al-Abbār (d. 658) says:

> She narrated from her father a lot and she learnt from some of her father's teachers. [...] And she is the one whose father married her to Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad, a youth who read [studied] with him. [This Aḥmad] was virtuous and poor, and [the Shaykh] was pleased with his manners and said to him once: Would you like that I marry my daughter to you? The young person became shy and mentioned to him an excuse that did not allow him to marry. The Shaykh married her to him, gave her *jihāz* [marriage portion] and took her to him.[3]

Imām ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539), author of *Tuḥfat al-fuqahāʾ* and other books, had a daughter famed for her beauty

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubulāʾ*, xx. 347–48. [2] Abū ʿUbaydah MASHHŪR, *ʿInāyat al-nisāʾ*, 131. [3] IBN AL-ABBĀR, *Takmilah ṣilat al-ṣilah*, 406.

and sought after by princes and the wealthy. Her father refused such offers because she was a scholar, one who had memorized his *Tuḥfat al-fuqahāʾ*. One particular student stayed with him until he became an expert in both the principles and practical details of the Law, and then wrote *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ*, a commentary on his shaykh's *Tuḥfat al-fuqahāʾ*. The latter was so pleased with the work that he married his daughter to this student, accepting the commentary as dowry. The student, who became a very famous jurist in his own right, was al-Kāsānī.[1]

The sources also record the scholars' attentiveness to the education of their wives. Ibn al-Ḥājj says: 'In our time there was Sīdī Abū Muḥammad. His wife read the whole Qurʾān with him and memorized it. Similarly she read with him the *Risālah* of Shaykh Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 386) and half of the *Muwaṭṭā* of Imām Mālik.[2] Another example is the wife of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, Uns bint ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Aḥmad al-Karīmī al-Lakhamī. Ibn Ḥajar enabled her to hear the *Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah* of his own shaykh, the great *muḥaddith* Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806); also the *Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah* of Sharaf al-Dīn ibn al-Kuwayk (d. 821). Then he got *ijāzah*s for her in Syria in Dhū l-Qaʿda 798, in Minā in Ṣafar 800 and again in Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 800, and later on.[3]

THE WOMEN'S OWN EFFORTS

We have recounted some of the efforts of men to enable the teaching of women in order to illustrate how they followed the *Sunnah* in this regard. However, that does not mean that the women's interest in ḥadīth was prompted only by the interest of their guardians or husbands. Rather, for a great number of women interest in knowledge of the *dīn* was deeply personal, without anybody prompting them or paving the way for them.

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[1] ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Abī l-Wafāʾ AL-QURASHĪ (d. 775), *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*, ii. 244–46, 278–79. [2] IBN AL-ḤĀJJ, *al-Madkhal*, ii. 215, cited in MASHHŪR, *ʿInāyat al-nisāʾ*, 122. [3] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar fī Tarjamah Shaykh al-Islām* IBN ḤAJAR, iii. 1208.

Thābit has narrated from Anas that Abū Bakr called ʿUmar to go with him to visit Umm Ayman since the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*, used to visit her. They found her crying, and asked her why, reminding her that whatever is with God is better for His Messenger. 'She said: I am not crying because I did not know that what is with God is better for His Messenger. Rather, I am crying because the revelation from heaven has been cut off. [Saying that as she did] she made them weep also.'[1]

During the Prophet's lifetime women were anxious not to miss any opportunity to learn from him. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal has narrated from ʿAbdullāh ibn Rāfiʿ that he said:

> Umm Salamah narrated that while she was combing her hair, she heard the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – saying on the pulpit: O people. She said to her hairdresser: Wrap my hair. She said: May I be sacrificed for you, he is only saying, 'O people'. Umm Salamah said: I said to her: Woe to you! Are we not from the people? Then she wrapped her hair and stood in a place in her room from where she could hear the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*. Umm Salamah said: Then I heard him saying: O people, while I am at the *Ḥawḍ* on the Day of Judgement you will be brought in groups. Then some of you will be taken into other ways. So I will call to you: Come along the way to me. Then a caller from behind me will cry out to me: Leave them, they changed after you. So I will say: Keep away, keep away.[2]

Fāṭimah bint Qays (mentioned in the previous chapter), the sister of al-Ḍaḥḥak ibn Qays, was among the early Emigrants. Her husband was killed in the first jihād. Soon after her waiting period had ended she heard the call to prayer and went to the mosque and prayed there. She says: 'I was in the row of the women. When the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – finished his prayer, he sat on the pulpit and he was smiling. Then he said: Let everyone remain in his place. Then he asked: Do you know why I have gathered you? They said: God and His Messenger know best. He said: By God, I have

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[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Faḍāʾil*, bāb *fī faḍāʾil Umm Ayman, raḍi Allāhu ʿan-hā.*
[2] *Ibid.*, bāb *ithbāt ḥawḍ nabiyyi-nā ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam wa ṣifāti-hi.*

not gathered you for [any] thing you desire or for any thing that you fear. Rather, I have gathered you because Tamīm al-Dārī, who was a Christian, came, pledged allegiance and embraced Islam, and told me a story which confirms what I have been telling you about Anti-Christ.' Then Fāṭimah narrated the whole long story of Tamīm al-Dārī.[1] Her dedication to learning can be gauged from the fact that, despite her recent bereavement, she hastened to the mosque when she learned that there was to be a sermon after it, then committed to memory the very long, detailed ḥadīth subsequently recorded in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim and other compilations, and confirmed in almost every detail by other narrators (see below, p. 188).

What the women asked about

We have noted that, during the Prophet's lifetime, the women attended assemblies where men were present, and to have their particular matters dealt with they requested that a day be set aside exclusively for them. The Prophet indeed encouraged his Companions to ask him about whatever was concerning them and about any need relating to the duties and laws of the *dīn*. Jābir has narrated that the Prophet said: 'The cure of ignorance is asking.'[2] He meant that for the ailment of ignorance there is no remedy other than asking and finding out. Also, God says in the Qurʾān (*al-Naḥl*, 16. 43): 'Then ask the people of remembrance if you do not know.'

The books of ḥadīth record many of the questions put by women. Some examples of that we have already seen. A few more will serve to demonstrate the range of matters that the women were concerned about:

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Qibṭiyyah narrates from Umm Salamah that the Prophet stated that an army heading to the House of God will be destroyed by sinking into the earth. Umm Salamah

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan wa ashrāṭ al-Sāʿah*, bāb *khurūj al-Dajjāl*. [2]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *fī l-majrūḥ yatayummam*. [3]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan wa ashrāt al-Sāʿah*, bāb *al-jaysh al-ladhī yaʾummu al-bayt*.

asked: 'What about one who was forced' [who did not choose to be in that army]? The Prophet said: 'He will be sunk with them. Then they will be raised according to their intentions.'[3]

Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab narrates from Khawlah bint Ḥakīm that she asked about whether the woman sees in her dream what the man sees. The Prophet, affirming it implicitly, explained to her that bathing becomes compulsory for the woman as for the man if, as a result of the dream, there is some emission.[1]

Fāṭimah bint Abī Ḥubaysh wanted to know if, when after her regular monthly period some bleeding continued, she should leave the prayer. The Prophet distinguished regular menstrual bleeding, the duration of which varies between individuals and which prohibits from prayer, from bleeding from a vein, which must be washed away and does not affect the duty to pray.[2]

Mujāhid (d. *ca.* 100) has narrated from Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays the hadith about the wedding of ʿĀʾishah when there was only a bowl of milk for guests. When ʿĀʾishah offered some to her guests they said they did not desire any. The Prophet said: 'Do not combine a lie with hunger. Then [Asmāʾ] said: O Messenger of God, if one of us says about something that she desires, "I do not desire", will it be counted as a lie? The Prophet said: The lie is written as a lie and the small lie is written as a small lie.'[3]

Zaynab bint Abī Salamah narrates from her mother Umm Salamah that she said: 'I said: O Messenger of God, is there reward for me in spending on the children of Abū Salamah [my husband]. I can not leave them like that – they are my children as well. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: Yes, there is a reward for you in what you spend on them.'[4]

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[1]AL-NASAʾĪ , *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *ghusl al marʾah tarā fī manāmi-hā mā yarā al-rajul*. [2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *al-istiḥāḍah*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *al-mustaḥāḍah*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *man rawā anna l-ḥayḍa idhā adbarat lā tadaʿu l-ṣalāh*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-farq bayna dam al-ḥayḍ wa-l-istiḥāḍah*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah wa sunani-hā*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-mustaḥaḍah al-latī qad ʿaddat ayyāma aqrāʾi-hā qabla an yastamirra bi-hā al-dam*; IBN ABĪ SHAYBAH, *Muṣannaf*, *Ṭahārahāt*, bāb *al-mustaḥaḍah kayfa taṣnaʿu*. [3]IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad*, *Musnad al-nisāʾ*. [4]*Ibid.*

About shyness in the way of learning

As we have just seen in the examples of the kinds of questions they asked, the women did not allow shyness to prevent them from seeking the knowledge that would strengthen their faith and practice and prepare them for the hereafter. Mujāhid said: 'The shy one (*mustaḥyī*) and the haughty one (*mustakbir*) cannot attain to knowledge.'[1] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar has commented on that: 'Shyness [*ḥayā*ʾ, shame] is a part of the faith. And that is the lawful [kind] that happens as respect and reverence for elders and great people, and it is praiseworthy. As for that shyness which leads to abandoning a legal matter – that is a rebuked and not a lawful shyness; rather, it is timidity and lowness, and that is what Mujāhid means when he said: the shy one cannot attain knowledge.'[2]

Thus the women Companions established the example for those after them of determined seeking after knowledge. They did not shy from asking even about what women feel shy to hear mentioned in front of men. Umm Salamah narrates that Umm Sulaym came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – God is not shy of saying the truth. Is a bath compulsory on a woman when she has a wet dream? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: [Yes.] When she sees the emission. Umm Salamah covered her face and said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – do women have wet dreams? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – said: Yes. May your hand be dusty! How otherwise does [a woman's] child become like her?'[3] ʿĀʾishah once said: 'How good are the women of the Anṣār! Shyness did not prevent them from acquiring understanding of their *dīn*.'[4]

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *ʿIlm*, bāb *al-ḥayāʾ fī l-ʿilm*. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, *ʿIlm*, bāb *al-ḥayāʾ fī l-ʿilm*. [3] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *ʿIlm*, bāb *al-ḥayāʾ fī l-ʿilm*. ('May your hand be dusty', literally rendered from the Arabic, is typically used, though it seems otherwise, to express criticism in an affectionate tone; there are similar usages in most languages.) [4] *Ibid.*

Women learning from the Companions

The women in the generation after the Companions, that of the Successors, put their questions to the Companions, both to the women and the men among them. Here is an example:

ʿAbdullāh ibn Jābir al-Aḥmasī narrates from his paternal aunt Zaynab bint al-Muhājir that she said:

I went for ḥajj and with me was another woman. I set up my tent and I made a vow not to speak. Then a man came and stood by the door of the tent and said: *al-salamu ʿalaykum*. My friend answered. Then he said: What is the matter with your friend? I said: She will remain silent for she has vowed not to speak. He said: Speak, for [that kind of vow] is from the practice of Jāhiliyyah. She says: I asked him, who are you, may God have mercy on you? He answered: I am a man from the Emigrants. I asked: From which group of Emigrants? He said: From the Quraysh. I said: From which Quraysh? He said: You are a big one for questions! I am Abū Bakr. I said: O caliph of the Messenger of God! We are fresh from the Jāhiliyyah, when no one us would feel security from others. God has brought to us what you see [meaning the peace and security around them]. So how long this will continue? He said: As long as your imāms remain righteous. I said: Who are the imāms? He said: Are there not among your people those nobles and leaders who are obeyed? I said: Surely. He said: Those are the imāms.[1]

WOMEN'S PRESERVING OF THE ḤADĪTH

A sound ḥadīth is defined as one whose narrator has preserved it unchanged from the time he heard it until he conveyed it. Preservation entails alert listening to the words, understanding their meaning, holding that meaning, holding the wording, being firm on it with full awareness and checking it until its transmission. It is by two means: memorization and writing.

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[1] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 470.

Memorization

Memorization, or preserving by heart, was the most popular form among the Companions, the Successors, the Followers, and those who came after them among the imāms and experts of ḥadīth. This is because knowledge preserved in the heart becomes part of the person, accompanies them always, almost like a mother tongue. ʿAffān ibn Muslim (d. 219) said: 'I asked ʿUbaydullāh ibn al-Ḥasan to bring out for me the book of al-Jurayrī. He refused and said: Go to Hilāl ibn Ḥaqq; he has got it. Then he said: I have found the most directly useful *(aḥḍar)* knowledge is the one I preserved in my heart and uttered by my tongue.'[1] ʿAbd al-Razzāq said: 'Any knowledge that does not "enter with its owner into the bathroom" – then do not consider it as knowledge.' Al-Aṣmāʾi (d. 217) says: 'Any knowledge that does not "enter with me in the bathroom", it is not knowledge.'[1]

What is narrated about the memory of the traditionists may seem to us to be exaggerated. ʿAlī ibn Khashram narrates that he discussed with Isḥāq ibn Rāhawayh (d. 238) the report of al-Shaʿbī saying: 'Any black that I wrote on any white – I know it by heart; and it never happened that anyone narrated a ḥadīth to me and I asked him to repeat it.' Then Isḥāq said to me [ʿAlī ibn Khashram]: 'Are you surprised at this, O Abū Ḥasan? I said: Yes. Then Isḥāq said: Then let me tell you about myself. I never wrote anything but [that by doing so] I learnt it by heart. And now it is as if I am looking at more than 70,000 ḥadīths in my book.'[2] He meant that he knew the ḥadīths by heart and could see them as if reading from his book.

The women memorized the ḥadīths of the Prophet as the men did. The wives of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*, and other women who heard him knew his sayings by heart. Some among them narrated a large number of ḥadīths, notably ʿĀʾishah. Nor are these ḥadīths narrated by women short texts.

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[1]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī*, ii. 250. The bathroom expression is used because that is where books were never taken. [2]*Ibid.*

Rather, some are very lengthy. We mentioned how Fāṭimah bint Qays was able to commit to memory the long ḥadīth of Tamīm al-Dārī after hearing it once, and for years she taught it to her students from memory. Al-Ṭabarānī compiled *al-Aḥādīth al-ṭiwāl* (The long ḥadīths), which contains several narrated by women.

Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab, considered the leading Successor, was exceptionally knowledgeable of Prophetic ḥadīths. His daughter learnt all of them by heart. Abū Bakr ibn Abī Dāwūd (d. 316) reports that ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Marwān (the Umayyad caliph (r. 65–86) asked for Saʿīd's daughter's hand in marriage for his son al-Walīd. Saʿīd refused the proposal, preferring to marry her to one of his impoverished students. He, the husband, said about her: 'She was among the most beautiful people, and most expert of those who know the Book of God by heart, and most knowledgeable of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*, and most aware of the right of the husband.' Abū Nuʿaym (d. 430) has narrated that 'one morning her husband took his cloak to go out. She said: Where are you going? He said: To the assembly of Saʿīd to get knowledge. She said to him: Sit here, I will teach you the knowledge of Saʿīd.'[1]

Similarly, Imām Mālik's daughter learnt all of his ḥadīths and memorized the whole *Muwaṭṭā*, the best book of its time combining ḥadīth and *fiqh* (jurisprudence). Al-Zubayr (d. 256) says: 'Mālik had a daughter who knew his knowledge [the *Muwaṭṭā*] by heart, and she used to be behind the door. When the reader made a mistake, she would correct him.' Muḥammad, his son, was not drawn to study and scholarship. Sometimes he would pass by with his clothes in disarray. Mālik would say to his students: 'Good manners are in the hand of God. This is my son and this is my daughter.'[2] Another Madinan who narrated extensively from Mālik among others is ʿĀbidah al-Madaniyyah. She was famed for knowing a lot of ḥadīths by heart Ibn al-Abbār says: 'She narrated a lot of ḥadīths.'[3]

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[1]ABŪ NUʿAYM, *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ*, ii. 167–68. [2]AL-QĀḌĪ ʿIYĀḌ , *Tartīb al-madārik*, i. 109–10. [3]MASHHŪR, *ʿInāyat al-nisāʾ*, 75.

While these prodigious feats of memory may appear, to us, to be exaggerated, they are likely to be accurate. It is a question of will combined with training. As of this writing, there are in Damascus 35 women who know the whole *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (including its chains of narrations) by heart. They are students of my shaykh, the excellent *muḥaddith*, Nūr al-Dīn ʿItr.

Writing

Initially the Prophet prohibited the writing down from him of anything other than the Qurʾān, lest it be mixed with the Qurʾān. Later, he allowed the writing down of his sayings. It has been narrated from him, from ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and other Companions that they said: 'Secure the knowledge by writing.'[1]

Writing was rare in Arabia until, from the early days of Islam, its importance was recognized. The Companions acquired this skill, and they began in it by copying out the verses of the Qurʾān and the ḥadīth. Women also took part in this effort. The Prophet himself instructed Shifāʾ bint ʿAbdullāh to teach writing to his wife Ḥafṣah.[2] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463) says: '[Shifāʾ] was among the virtuous and intelligent women. The Prophet used to visit her.'[3] Similarly, ʿĀʾishah and Umm Salamah, and many other women Companions were well known for writing. The letters of ʿĀʾishah and Umm Salamah are recorded in the sources. Al-Qalqashandī (d. 821) has mentioned that a group of women knew the skill of writing, and no one from among the *salaf* objected to that.[4]

The art of writing spread rapidly among women from the beginning of the second century AH onwards. The biographical dictionaries affirm that writing and the practice of calligraphy were taught from childhood, that even slave girls became proficient in it. They used to do calligraphy on shirts, flags, banners, cloaks, sleeves, turbans, bandages, headbands, pillows, handker-

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[1]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *Jamiʿi bayān al-ʿilm wa faḍli-hī*, 91. [2]IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, Musnad al-nisāʾ*, vi. 372. [3]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʾāb fī maʿrifah al-aṣḥāb*, ii. 740. [4]al-Qalqashqandī, as cited in MASHHŪR *ʿInāyat al-nisāʾ bi-l-ḥadīth al-nabawī*, 114.

chiefs, curtains, sheets, beds, sofas, cushions, crowns, the frames of windows and doors, and many other things.[1]

When, in the later centuries, people relied on the major compilations of ḥadīth, which not all could memorize, writing became essential. There are many examples of women who wrote books of ḥadīth in their own hand. Here I will mention a few examples of *muḥaddithāt* celebrated for their calligraphy.

Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Muʾaddib al-ʿAṭṭār (d. 480), also known by her *kunyah* Umm al-Faḍl and as Bint al-Aqrāʾ, followed the famous calligrapher Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 413) in the art and passed it on to many. The people referred to her writing as exemplary.[2] Ibn al-Jawzī says: 'Her writing was extremely beautiful; she used to write on the pattern (*ṭarīqah*) of Ibn al-Bawwāb. The people practised under her. She was invited to write the peace treaty [with the Byzantines]. She travelled for the writing to ʿAmīd al-Mulk Abū Naṣr al-Kindī [d. 456].[3] Ibn Kathīr says: 'She used to write the '*mansūb*' calligraphy on the pattern of Ibn al-Bawwāb.'[4] Al-Samʿānī says: 'I heard Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Anṣārī saying: I heard Fāṭimah bint al-Aqrāʾ saying: I wrote a paper for ʿAmīd al-Mulk and he gave me one thousand dinars.'[5] Evidently she was an important figure whose art was highly regarded and valued, and she travelled in this work.

Al-Samʿānī says about 'Fakhr al-Nisāʾ' Umm Muḥammad Shuhdah, daughter of the famous *muḥaddith* Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj al-Dīnawarī (d. 574): 'She was from among the descendants of traditionists, distinguished, eloquent, and had beautiful handwriting. She wrote on the way of Bint al-Aqrāʾ. In her time there was no one in Baghdad who had handwriting like her. Usually she wrote for the caliph al-Muqtafī [r. 530–55].[6] Ibn al-Jawzī praises her calligraphy, her goodness and works of charity

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[1]AL-WASHSHĀʾ, *al-Ẓarf wa-l-ẓurafāʾ*, 317, 355 [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 480. [3]IBN AL-JAWZĪ (d. 597), *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ix. 40. [4]IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihayah*, *sub anno* 480. [5]AL-DHAHABĪ *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 481. [6]AL-DHAHABĪ *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 570–80), 147.

through a long life.[1] Al-Ṣafādī (d. 764) notes her extensive knowledge of ḥadīth, her piety, God-wariness, benevolence and calls her 'the calligrapher, the pride of womanhood, a *muḥaddithah* of Iraq with a high *isnād*.'[2] Her style of writing (*mansūb*) gained much popularity and was taken up generation after generation.[3]

Another late example is of Fawz bint Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī from the descendants of al-ʿAfīf ibn Manṣūr. The vizier al-Hādī ibn Ibrāhīm says: 'She was one of the scholars; she had a novel handwriting. Her calligraphy is well-known in the Qurʾāns and prefaces that are with us and with others also. She used to teach Arabic to her relatives among the men. Her grave is in Sanʿa at al-Mashhad al-Aḥmar near the mosque of Ibn Wahb.'[4]

Writing marginal notes

Another application of the skill of writing was the women's scholarly annotation in the margins of the books they studied. The great man of letters al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255) says: 'Jaʿfar ibn Saʿīd the milk-brother and chamberlain (*ḥājib*) of Ayyūb ibn Jaʿfar told me that Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā's *Tawqīʿāt* (concise writings) was mentioned to ʿAmr ibn Masʿadah. He said: I have read the *tawqīʿāt* of Umm Jaʿfar in the margins and at the foot [of the pages] of the books, I found them better in shortness and more encompassing in the meaning.'[5]

Comparison and correction

The people of ḥadīth were very strict about writing. They would accept a book only if it had been compared with the original of the shaykh from whom the book's author says he is narrating. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says: 'I asked the qāḍī Abū l-Ṭayyib Ṭāhir ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Ṭabarī about one who finds [in his written

[1] IBN AL-JAWZĪ, *al-Mashaykhah*, 209. [2] AL-ṢAFĀDĪ, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, xvi. 190. [3] See IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, iii. 255–56. [4] ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad AL-ḤIBASHĪ, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamāniyyāt*, 162. [5] al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn*, i. 106–07.

notes a reference] to a shaykh named and described in the written [notes] but he does not [now] know him. The qāḍī said: It is not allowed for him to narrate that writing. The writing from which one narrates must have been compared with the original of the shaykh from whom [the narrator] is narrating.'[1] Hishām ibn ʿUrwah (d. 146) recalls: 'My father would ask me: Have you written? I would say: Yes; then he would ask: Have you compared? I would say: No. Then he would say: You have not written.' Abū Muḥammad Aflaḥ ibn Bassām says: 'I was with al-Qaʿnabī and I wrote down his ḥadīth. He asked me: Have you written down. I said yes. Then he asked, have you compared? I said, no. He said, then you did not do anything.'[1]

Women traditionists adhered to the same strict practice. The great *muḥaddithah* Umm al-Kirām Karīmah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥatim al-Marwaziyyah (d. 465) is a famous narrator of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Her version of it has always been particularly popular. She compared her copy with her shaykh al-Kushmīhanī's original. Later she settled in Makkah, where the people came to her from everywhere and heard the whole *Ṣaḥīḥ* from her. She would not allow anyone to narrate from her unless they had compared with her original. Al-Dhahabī says: 'Whenever she narrated, she would compare with her original. She had knowledge and good understanding [combined] with goodness and worship.'[2] Al-Ṣafādī says: 'Her book was very accurate.'[3] Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089) says: She would be most accurate with her book and compare its copies.'[4] Abū l-Ghanāʾim al-Narsī says: 'Karīmah brought for me her original copy of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. I sat down in front of Karīmah and wrote down seven pages and read them with her. I wanted to compare [my copy] with her original by myself. She said: No, [I do not permit it] unless you compare it with me. Then I did comparison with her.'[5]

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 237. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 233. [3] AL-ṢAFĀDĪ, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, xxiv. 338. [4] IBN AL-ʿIMĀD, *Shadharat al-dhahab*, iii. 314. [5] AL-DHAHABĪ *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 234.

Chapter 3

Occasions, travels, venues for learning ḥadīth, and kinds of learning

This chapter begins with an account of the conditions and circumstances of the occasions, some public, others private, on which the women had an opportunity to learn the religion from the Prophet and his Companions. Next, it explains the precedents for travelling for the sake of learning ḥadīth, how those precedents were followed up in later centuries, and the different venues where the women studied. The chapter ends with a brief survey of the ways in which ḥadīths were learnt and diffused.

PUBLIC OCCASIONS

The women sometimes attended as a group. Shahr ibn Ḥawshab has narrated from Asmāʾ bint Yazīd that, in one such gathering, on seeing a woman who had on two gold bracelets, 'the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said to her: Would you wish God to make you wear two bracelets of fire?' Asmāʾ says: 'By God, I do not remember if she took them off [herself] or I took them off.'[1] The group could include young girls: Umm ʿAlī bint Abī l-Ḥakam narrates from Umayyah bint Qays Abī l-Ṣalt al-Ghifāriyyah that she came among a company of women of the Ghifār tribe to the Prophet. It was the occasion of the Khaybar campaign and the women wanted to go to the battlefield in order to tend the wounded. The Prophet permitted this, saying: 'With the

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[1] IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, musnad al-nisāʾ*.

blessing of God.' Then, Umayyah bint Qays tells her own part of the story:

Then we set out with him. I was a young girl. He made me sit on his she-camel behind the luggage. He got off in the morning and made his camel sit down. I saw the bag had got traces of blood from me. It was the first time I had a period. Then I sat forward on the camel [to hide it] and I was embarrassed. When the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – saw what happened to me and the traces of blood, he said: Perhaps you have had menstrual bleeding? I said: Yes. He said: Attend to yourself. Then, take a container of water, then put salt in it, then wash the affected part of the bag, then come back.' I did so. When God conquered Khaybar for us, the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – took [out of the booty] this necklace that you see on my neck and gave it to me and put it on my neck with his hand. By God it will never be parted from me.
It remained on her neck until she died, and she made a will that it should be buried with her. Also, whenever she cleansed herself she used salt in the water and she stipulated in her will that salted water be used for the washing of her [body before burial].'[1]

This ḥadīth demonstrates that the Prophet permitted women to accompany him at home and while travelling – in this case on a military campaign, when he was surrounded by an army of men. Also, in its account of a personal memory (and the necklace) treasured for a lifetime, it presents a striking example of how fondly the Prophet was loved by those who learnt from him. Their fondness mirrors his solicitude for them, and the tenderness with which he responded when someone came to him with a need. The respectful attentiveness that has ever since characterized the traditional attitudes of Muslim students before their teachers, male or female, is derived as much from the example of the women as from the men who attended upon and served him. Shahr ibn Ḥawshab has narrated from Asmāʾ bint Yazīd that she said: 'I was holding the rein of ʿAḍbāʾ, the she-camel of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa*

[1]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqat al-kubrā*, viii. 293.

sallam – when [verses of the] sūrat *al-Māʾidah* [were] revealed to him. Because of the heaviness of the revelation the camel's leg (*ʿaḍud*) was on the point of buckling (*daqqa*).'[1]

Another ḥadīth from Asmāʾ bint Yazīd illustrates how the women, when they called on the Prophet while he was with his Companions, were not inhibited from putting their questions to him.

Asmāʾ said: May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – I am a representative (*wafidah*) of the women to you. God has sent you as a Messenger to all men and women. So we have believed in you and your God. [Now,] we women are confined to the houses and bearing your children. You men [in what has been commanded to you] have been preferred over us by the *jumūʿah* and [other] congregational prayers, visiting the sick, attending funerals, [doing] ḥajj after ḥajj and, more than that, the jihād in the path of God. When [you] men go for ḥajj or *ʿumrah* or jihād, we look after your property, we weave your clothes, and bring up your children. Will we not share with you in the reward? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – turned to his Companions with his whole face, then said: Have you heard any woman asking about her religion better than this? They said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – we never thought that any woman could be guided to something like that. Then the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – turned to her and said: Understand, O woman, and tell the other women behind you that [a wife's] looking after her husband, seeking his contentment and going along with his assent is equal to all that [i.e. all that the religion has commanded to the men]. [Narrator's comment:] The woman went back and her face was shining with happiness.[2]

The ḥajj; ḥajjat al-wadāʿ

The ḥajj pilgrimage, considered from the viewpoint of its being a public occasion, differs from the daily prayers at the mosque in that it happens only once a year, and indeed for the vast

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[1]IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, musnad al-nisāʾ*. [2]IBN AL-ATHĪR (d. 630), *Usd al-ghābah*, vii. 17–18.

majority of believers only once a lifetime. The restrictions that apply to women's attendance at the mosque – praying in clearly separated rows and, where practicable, having different entrances to the mosque building, etc. – do not apply to the pilgrimage. By contrast with attendance at a local community mosque, in the great throngs of Makkah and Madinah during the ḥajj period, there is relatively little chance of repeat encounters between men and women of a kind that might distract them from the normal purpose of going to the mosque. Accordingly, we would expect that the women who attended the ḥajj during the lifetime of the Prophet would have heard as many ḥadīths as the men heard on the same occasion. That is indeed the case, and there is a reassuring identity in the content of what is narrated by different routes from the men and from the women.

Ḥajjat al-wadāʿ, 'the farewell pilgrimage', so called because it was the last ḥajj to be led by the Prophet himself, was his final major address to the Muslims en masse. It was attended by a very large number of women and children, as well as the men. It is an important source of ḥadīths relating to the faith in general and to details of the rites of pilgrimage in particular. Some examples of the latter:

ʿĀʾishah narrates that Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays the wife of Abū Bakr, while going for ḥajj, delivered beside a tree. The Prophet asked Abū Bakr to ask her to take a bath and then to put on *iḥrām*.[1] From this report the jurists have derived that women, even in the state of impurity can put on *iḥrām* and the bath is a *sunnah* of putting on the *iḥrām* and does not mark the ending of the state of impurity. In another ḥadīth, ʿĀʾishah said: 'I could still see stains of perfume on the head of the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – when he was in the state of *iḥrām*.'[2] Because of this ḥadīth Abū Ḥanīfah and other jurists

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *iḥrām al-nufasāʾ wa istiḥābābi ightisāli-hā li-l-iḥrām*; AL-NASAʾĪ , *Sunan*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *mā tafʿalu l-nufasāʾ ʿinda l-iḥrām*.
[2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *al-ṭīb ʿinda al-iḥrām*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *al-ṭīb li-l-muḥrim ʿinda al-iḥrām*.

have held that before making the intention for ḥajj or *ʿumrah* one can apply perfume, even if traces of it remain after putting on *iḥrām*. In another ḥadīth ʿĀʾishah reports: 'We were in the state of *iḥrām* with the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. When a stranger passed by us, we would let down our head-covering [i.e. so as to veil the face], and when [the stranger] had passed us, then we would raise it [again].'[1] The jurists have inferred from this that for women in general (i.e. other than the Prophet's wives) head-coverings may be worn during the time of ḥajj provided they do not touch the face. Yūsuf ibn Māhak narrated from his mother from ʿĀʾishah that she said: 'I said: O Messenger of God, should we not build for you a house in Minā? He said: No, Minā is a station of those who arrive earliest.'[2] The meaning is that one cannot reserve a place for oneself at Minā. Mughīrah ibn Ḥakīm narrated from Ṣafiyyah bint Shaybah, from Tamlik (a woman Companion who had a house overlooking Ṣafā and Marwah) that she said: 'I watched the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – while I was in my upper room between Ṣafā and Marwah and he was saying: O people! God has prescribed the *saʿy* [the running between Ṣafā and Marwah] for you, so do *saʿy*.'[3]

The ḥajj was also an opportunity to get answers to more general questions, not connected to the rites of pilgrimage. A couple of examples must suffice to illustrate how the women, in spite of the press of people, managed to put their questions directly to the Prophet.

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās has narrated that Faḍl ibn ʿAbbās (who is reported to have been an exceptionally handsome boy) was sitting behind the Messenger of God during the ḥajj. A woman from Khathʿam came and began to stare at Faḍl, who stared back. The Prophet turned Faḍl's face away with his hand to

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[1] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *fī l-muḥrimah tughaṭṭī wajha-hā*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *al-muḥrimah tusdil al-thawb ʿalā wajhi-hā*. [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *taḥrīm ḥaram Makkah*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *al-nuzūl bi Minā*. [3] IBN ABĪ ʿĀṢIM (d. 287), *al-Āḥād wa-l-mathānī*, vi. 222.

prevent that. Then the woman asked: 'O Messenger of God, God's command to do ḥajj has become valid on my father when he is very old and cannot sit on a camel. Can I do ḥajj for him? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Yes. And that was during *ḥajjat al-wadāʿ*.'[1] Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh narrates: 'A woman brought her child to the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – during his ḥajj and said: O Messenger of God, is there a ḥajj for this child? He said: Yes, and you will get reward [for that].'[2]

It is remarkable that the women were so intent on finding out what the religion required of them and then so zealous in preserving and transmitting what they learnt. Equally remarkable is the degree of conformity between their different accounts – the minor variations serve as evidence of their truthfulness in reporting what they remembered.

Shabīb ibn Gharqadah narrates from Jamrah bint Quḥāfab that she said:

I was with *umm al-muʾminīn* Umm Salamah during *ḥajjat al-wadāʿ*. Then I heard the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: O my *ummah* (*ya ummatā*), have I conveyed the message to you? She says: My little boy asked why is the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – calling to his mother? She says: I said: My son, he means his *ummah*. And he was saying: Listen! The property of each of you, your honour, your blood [i.e. life] is inviolable to you as this day is inviolable in this town in this month.[3]

Rabīʿah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥuṣayn narrated about his grandmother Sarrāʾ bint Nabhān who had been a temple priestess before embracing Islam:

She heard the Messenger of God in *ḥajjat al-wadāʿ* on the day that is called 'the day of the heads' [i.e. the day of the sacrifice] say: What is

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *wujūb al-ḥajj wa faḍli-hi*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *al-ḥajj ʿan al-ʿājiz*. [2] AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī ḥajj al-ṣabī*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī ḥajj al-ṣabī*; MUSLIM has narrated it from Ibn ʿAbbās in *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *ṣiḥḥat ḥajj al-ṣabī*. [3] ABŪ NUʿAYM AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 206.

this day? [The people] said: God and his Messenger know best. He said: This is the best of the days of *tashrīq* [10 Dhū l-Ḥijjah]. Then he said: What is this town? They said: God and His Messenger know best. He said, *al-mashʿar al-ḥarām*. Then he said: Listen! the blood of each of you, your properties and your honour, are inviolable in this town of yours. Listen! I do not know, perhaps I will not see you after this day, so the nearest of you must convey to the furthest of you. Listen! have I conveyed the message? They answered: Yes. Then he made his way back to Madinah where he died.'[1]

PRIVATE OCCASIONS

Women had an advantage over men in being able freely to visit the Prophet's wives and using this opportunity to learn. Some examples have come earlier. I give here a few more:

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥumayd has narrated from his father, from his mother Umm Kulthūm bint ʿUqbah from Busrah bint Ṣafwān that she said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – called on [us] while I was combing the hair of ʿĀʾishah. He said: Busrah, who is proposing marriage to Umm Kulthūm? I said: So-and-so and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf. He said: Then why not marry [her] to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf, for he is among the best of the Muslims and of their leaders? I said: Umm Kulthūm dislikes to marry someone who already has a wife; nor does she like to ask ʿAbd al-Raḥmān [to divorce] his previous wife, for she is her cousin. Then the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – repeated his suggestion and said: If she marries [him] she will be happy and she will rejoice [in it]. I came back and I told Umm Kulthūm. She called ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, and [her relatives] Khālid ibn Saʿīd ibn al-ʿĀṣ and ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān. These two married her to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf.[2]

Zaynab, the wife of ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, was an artisan, able to make some income by selling the things she made. This

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[1] IBN ABĪ ʿĀṢIM, *al-Āḥād wa-l-mathānī*, vi. 92. [2] ABŪ NUʿAYM AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 195; AL-ḤĀKIM, *al-Mustadrak ʿalā l-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, iii. 350.

is an important ḥadīth narrated from her by ʿAmr ibn al-Ḥārith, and worth quoting in full:

She said: The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – gave a speech to us women in which he said: Give charity, even if it is from your jewelry, because [otherwise] you may be the most [numerous] among all the people of the Fire on the Day of Resurrection. She said: My husband ʿAbdullāh was a man of light hand [i.e. of little wealth]. I said to him: Ask the Messenger of God for me – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – is it enough for my [giving] charity that I spend on my husband and on orphans under my guardianship? She said: Awe of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was settled in the heart of the people; [for that reason] my husband said to me: You go and ask him. She said: Then I went out until I came to his door, where I found a woman from the Anṣār, her name was also Zaynab, and she had come to ask the same question. She says: Then Bilāl came out to us; we said to him: Ask the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – for us: is it enough for our [giving] charity if we spend on our own husbands and orphans under our guardianship. She says then Bilāl went inside and said to the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – that it is Zaynab at the door. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Which Zaynab? Bilāl said: Zaynab, the wife of ʿAbdullāh, and Zaynab, a woman from the Anṣār. They are asking you about spending on their husbands and orphans under their guardianship. Will that be enough for their [giving] charity? She says: Then Bilāl came out to us and said: The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – says: For you there is double reward: the reward of [being good to family] relations and the reward of [giving] charity.[1]

The circumstances of this ḥadīth are of particular interest in that they demonstrate that ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd – famous as one of the leading jurists in the early period of Islam – saw no harm in his wife's going out for advice on a matter that he could have followed up himself. Also, the Prophet's concern to identify the questioner is a reminder that knowing about the

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāh*, bāb *al-zakāh ʿalā l-zawj wa-l-aytām fī l-ḥijr*, MUSLIM *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāh*, bāb *faḍl al-nafaqah wa-l-ṣadaqah ʿalā l-aqrabīn wa-l-zawj*... .

questioner is relevant to identifying their need precisely and making the form of the answer appropriate to their ability to understand and willingness to act upon the advice. That in turn means that he did not disdain to take an interest in the personal circumstances of his Companions. His concern for them was not formal or abstract, but warm, intimate, and that is why, or at least partly why, he was so deeply trusted and loved by them.

Anas ibn Mālik narrates from Salāmah, who looked after the Prophet's son, Ibrāhīm, that she said:

O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – you convey all good news and glad tidings to the men, and do not tell women glad tidings. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Have your companions [meaning other women] sent you for this? She said: Yes, they have commanded me to ask you this question. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Will one of you not be content [to know] that when she is pregnant by her husband and he is happy with her, she gets the same reward as one who is fasting the day and praying the night in the path of God? [That] when she has labour pains, those who are in the heaven and the earth do not know what comfort has been hidden in store for [her]? [And that] when she delivers the child, for every sucking that child does, she has a good deed [added to her reckoning]? [And that] when the child causes her to wake in the night, she gets the reward [the equal of] of freeing seventy slaves in the path of God? Salāmah, do you know, who I mean by this great reward? It is for those women who are pure, righteous, obedient to their husbands and never ungrateful to them.[1]

We know that the Prophet visited his Companions in their houses, that he called on his female relatives and, when there was a need for that, also on other women. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn Abī Ḥathmah has narrated that the Prophet prayed in the house of al-Shifāʾ on the right side as one enters. He prayed also in the house of Busrah bint Ṣafwān.[2] On such occasions

[1]ABŪ NUʿAYM AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 253. [2]Ibn Shabbah AL-NUMAYRĪ (d. 262), *Akhbār al-madīnah al-nabawiyyah*, i. 74.

the women of that house were able to profit from the chance to hear his judgements, to put questions and learn from him.

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith al-Hāshimī has narrated from Umm al-Faḍl that she said:

The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was in my house. Then a bedouin came and said: O Messenger of God, I had a wife then I married another one. My first wife claims that she has breast-fed the second one once or twice. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: One or two actions of breast-feeding do not make anyone unlawful.[1]

Yazīd ibn al-Hād narrated from Hind bint al-Ḥārith, from Umm al-Faḍl that she said:

The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – called upon [her husband] ʿAbbās, the uncle of the Prophet, while he was ill. ʿAbbās wished to die. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: O ʿAbbās, O uncle of the Messenger of God, do not wish death. For if you are a good-doer you will increase your good deeds and that will be better for you. And if you are a wrong-doer, then if you are respited, you will have a chance to ask forgiveness. So do not wish death.[2]

The Prophet visited al-Rubayyiʿ bint Muʾawwidh on the morning of her marriage. She narrates:

The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – called upon me on the day of my marriage and sat down on [this] spot on this bed of mine, and two girls were beating *duff* and singing about my fathers who were killed in the battle of Badr. In their song, they said: We have a prophet who knows what will happen tomorrow. The Prophet of God, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*, said: As for this bit, do not say it.[3]

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[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Raḍāʿ*, bāb *al-maṣṣah wa-l-maṣṣatān*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *lā tuḥarrim al-maṣṣah wa lā al-maṣṣatān*; AL-NASAʾĪ , *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *al-qadr al-ladhī yuḥarrimu min al-raḍāʿah*; AL-DĀRIMĪ, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *kam raḍʿah tuḥarrim*. [2] IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad*, *musnad al-nisāʾ*. [3] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 477; AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *ḍarb al-duff fī l-nikāḥ wa-l-walīmah*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Adab*, bāb *fī l-nahy ʿan al-ghināʾ*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī iʿlān al-nikāḥ*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *al-ghināʾ wa-l-duff*.

Anas ibn Mālik narrates that the Messenger of God visited Umm Sulaym and did *nafl* prayer in her house and said: 'O Umm Sulaym, when you pray *farḍ ṣalāh*, then say *subḥān al-lāh* ten times, *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāh* ten times and *al-lāhu akbar* ten times. Then ask God whatever you want: for you will be answered with Yes, Yes, Yes.'[1] Anas ibn Mālik also narrates:

The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – used to visit Umm Sulaym and she would offer him something that she prepared for him. I had a brother younger than me whose *kunyah* was Abū ʿUmayr. One day, the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – visited us and said: Why is Abū ʿUmayr down-hearted? Umm Sulaym said: his *ṣaʿwah* [a small bird] that he used to play with has died. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – began to stroke his head and said [consoling him with a little rhyme]: O Abū ʿUmayr, what befell *nughayr* [the bird]?[2]

The Messenger of God respected Umm Ḥarām for his kinship with her and used to visit her home and take rest there. She was the maternal aunt of Anas ibn Mālik. He narrates:

Umm Ḥarām bint Milḥān narrated to me that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – took rest in her house once. Then he woke up and he was smiling. I said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – why are you smiling? He said: Some people of my community were shown to me riding the sea like kings on thrones. I said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – pray to God that He makes me among them. He prayed and said: You are among them. Then ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit married her and travelled with her to [join] the naval campaign. [On the way] she died after falling down from her mount.[3]

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[1] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 426. [2] *Ibid.*, 427; AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Adab*, bāb *al-kunyah li-l-ṣabī wa qabla an yūlad li-l-rajul*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Adab*, bāb *istiḥbāb taḥnīk al-mawlūd ʿinda wilādati-hi*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Adab*, bāb *fī l-rajul yatakannā wa laysa la-hu walad.* [3] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Taʿbīr*, bāb *al-ruʾyah bi-l-nahār*; IBN AL-ATHĪR, *Usd al-ghābah*, vii. 305. (The naval campaign, to Cyprus in 27 AH, took place under Muʿāwiyah's governorship during the caliphate of ʿUthmān.)

The Night Journey of the Prophet took place when he was in the house of his cousin Umm Hānī bint Abī Ṭālib. The biographer Ibn Isḥāq cites the ḥadīth from her that she said:

That journey took place when the Messenger of God was in my house. He slept the night there. He prayed *ʿishā.* Then he slept and we also slept. When it was a little before the dawn he woke us up. After he did the morning prayer and we also did it with him, he said: 'Umm Hānī, I prayed with you in the night prayer as you saw in this valley. Then I came to Jerusalem and prayed there. Then he mentioned the whole story.[1]

With the ending of prophethood the duty to teach, for which the Prophet had prepared them, was carried by the learned ones among his Companions and those after them who emulated them in virtue and piety. Women were among these teachers but here our interest is on their efforts as students. A substantial body of information about the qualities of the Companions and their teaching relies on those efforts. In his account of Unaysah al-Nakhaʿiyyah, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr says that she said about Muʿādh's coming to the Yemen: 'Muʿādh said to us: I am the messenger of the Messenger of God to you. Pray five times a day, fast the month of Ramaḍān, do the ḥajj of the House [in Makkah], those among you who can manage it. And Muʿādh at that time was eighteen years old.'[2] Ismāʿīl al-Bazzār has narrated that Umm ʿAfīf said: 'I saw ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib wearing a red cloak like the cloaks of labourers; it had a white patch on it.'[3] Abū Ubaydah has narrated from Luʾluʾah, the freed slave of Umm al-Ḥakam bint ʿAmmār that she described ʿAmmār for them and said that 'he was tall, brown... broad-shouldered, and he did not change [his] white hair [by dyeing it].'[4]

The women visited scholars in their homes to ask them about matters of religion or guidance in it. Umm Ṭalq narrates: 'I called on Abū Dharr and I saw him – hair disordered, dusty;

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[1]IBN HISHĀM, *al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah*, ii. 43–44. [2]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʿāb*, ii. 708. [3]IBN ABĪ L-DUNYĀ, *al-Khumūl wa-l-tawāḍuʿ*, no. 132. [4]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, iii. 264.

in his hand, wool [and] he had two sticks that he was knitting with. I did not see anything in his house. So I gave him some flour and grilled flour. Then he said: As for your reward, it is upon God.'[1] Abū l-Ṣabāḥ has narrated from Umm Kathīr bint Marqad that she said: 'I and my sister called on Anas ibn Mālik. I said: My sister wants to ask you something, but she feels shy. He said: She should ask, for I have heard the Messenger of God say 'Seeking knowledge is a duty'. My sister said to him: I have a son who is [spending much time] playing with pigeons. He said: It is the pastime of hypocrites.'[2] Bishr ibn ʿUmar narrates from Umm ʿAbdān, wife of Hishām ibn Ḥassān, that she said: 'We were staying with Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn as guests. We used to hear his weeping in the night [i.e. during prayer and supplication] and his laughter in the day [as part of entertaining his guests].'[3] Āṣim al-Aḥwāl narrates from Karīmah bint Sīrīn that she said: 'I asked ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar: I have bound myself to fast every Wednesday; and the coming Wednesday is the day of sacrifice. He said: God has commanded fulfillment of vows and the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – has prohibited fasting on the day of sacrifice.'[4] Ibn ʿUmar was indicating that she must do the fast as she had vowed to, but on another day.

ʿUmar ibn Qays narrated from his mother that she called on ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr in his house while he was praying. A snake fell from the roof onto his son Hāshim, and coiled itself on his stomach:[5]

All the people of the house cried Snake! and chased it until they killed it. But ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr continued praying. He did not turn his face and he did not hasten. He finished his prayer after the snake had already been killed. Then he said: What happened to you? Hāshim's

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 74. [2]BAḤSHAL AL-WĀSIṬĪ (d. 292), *Taʾrīkh Wāsiṭ*, 70. 'Hypocrites' in Islamic usage means those whose religion is, by the standards of the Companions, enfeebled by other goals than doing God's will. [3]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, v. 335. [4]IBN ḤIBBĀN (d. 354), *K. al-Thiqāt*, v. 343. [5]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh Dimashq al-kabīr* (*al-Juzʾ al-thālith min tarājim ḥarf al-ʿayn*), 413.

mother said: May God have mercy on you! If we do not, does not your son also matter to you? ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr said: Woe to you! what would have been left of my prayer if I had turned away?

Ḥajjāj ibn Ḥassān narrates that he and his sister called on Anas ibn Mālik. Addressing Ḥajjāj, his sister al-Mughīrah said:

You, at that time were a young boy and you had two plaits in your hair. Anas ibn Mālik passed his hand over your head and blessed you and said: Shave these two plaits or cut them off, because they are [in a distinctively] Jewish style.[1]

Sometimes, following the Prophet's example, it was the scholars who would call on the women. Hazzān ibn Saʿīd has narrated from Umm al-Ṣaʿbah that she said: 'Abū l-Dardāʾ visited us at the time of *fitnah* when we were gathered and said: Die, [so that] the rule of children does not reach you [i.e. Die, so that you do not have to live to see Muslims subjected to dynastic rule].'[2] Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUbaydullāh has narrated from Karīmah bint Ḥasḥās al-Muzaniyyah that she said: 'I heard Abū Hurayrah in the house of Umm al-Dardāʾ saying: The Messenger of God said: Three things are [remnants from the time] of unbelief – excessive bewailing of the dead; tearing of the clothes; and accusing people about their lineage.'[3]

TRAVELLING

Travelling for knowledge is among the higher qualities that the Prophet encouraged: 'Whoever walks a way for seeking knowledge, God will facilitate for him a way to paradise.'[4] It has long

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[1]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Tarajjul*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-rukhṣa*. Muslims are discouraged from imitating non-Muslims in matters and manners connected to the non-Muslims' religious symbols or worship. [2]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Talkhīṣ al-mutashābih*, i. 406. *Fitnah* here refers to the civil strife among the Muslims from the latter part of the rule of ʿUthmān through the rule of ʿAlī. [3]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh Dimashq*, *tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 314. [4]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Dhikr wa-l-duʿāʾ*, bāb *faḍl al-ijtimāʿ ʿalā tilāwat al-Qurʾān*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Muqaddimah*, bāb *faḍl al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-ḥathth ʿalā ṭalab al-ʿilm*.

been an established tradition among Islamic scholars, particularly among the *muḥaddithūn.* Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. 162) said: 'God removes the trial from this *ummah*, because of the travelling of the people of ḥadīth.' Imām Mālik has narrated from Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd from Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab that he said: 'I used to travel for days and nights for a single ḥadīth.' Naṣr ibn Marzūq narrates from ʿAmr ibn Abī Salamah that he said: 'I said to Awzāʿī: Abū ʿAmr [*kunyah* of Imām Awzāʿī], I have been accompanying you all the time for the last four days and I did not hear from you except thirty ḥadīths. He said: Do you consider thirty ḥadīths little in four days? Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh travelled to Egypt [for one ḥadīth]: he bought a camel and rode it until he arrived there and asked ʿUqbah ibn ʿĀmir about a single ḥadīth and came back to Madina. And you consider thirty ḥadīths little in four days!'[1]

It is preferred that study begins with the scholars of one's own locality, and among them those with higher (i.e., shorter) *isnād*s, with fewer narrators in the chain, bringing one closer to the original source. After that, one should go to hear and study ḥadīth with teachers in other towns. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal commended travelling to get a higher *isnād*, and gave this example: 'ʿAlqamah and al-Aswad received the ḥadīth of ʿUmar through other people, but they would not be satisfied until they travelled to ʿUmar [himself], then heard [the ḥadīth] from him [directly].'[2]

Hajj journeys

Women also travelled to get the knowledge of the scholars of other towns. We showed earlier that women accompanied the men on some military campaigns and, despite the rigours of this kind of travelling, accumulated ḥadīths and *sunnah*s on the way. However, for obvious reasons, the major focus of Muslim travelling was, and remains, the annual pilgrimage to Makkah and Madinah. The ḥajj quickly became established as the occasion

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[1]AL-ḤĀKIM, *Maʿrifat ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, 10–11. [2]IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 148.

for scholars from different centres of learning in the Islamic world to meet. Sometimes, students of ḥadīth undertook ḥajj journeys with the primary intention of meeting the ulema.[1] The meetings and exchanges among scholars diffused the *Sunnah* widely and thereby gave an enduring cohesion and solidarity to the Islamic way of life. This cultural unity was, for all practical purposes, disconnected from political power and was therefore only very briefly, and only regionally, reflected in political unity. It is important to reflect on, and properly acknowledge, the central role of women, as scholars and teachers, and as the first resource for children growing up in Islam, in preserving and sustaining, and diffusing, the *Sunnah*.

We have seen examples of ḥadīths that the women acquired during *ḥajjat al-wadāʿ*. I give below examples of their learning, after the Prophet passed away, from his Companions and their Successors.

Al-Ḥakam ibn Jaḥl narrates from Umm al-Kirām that she said: 'There [during the ḥajj] I met a woman in Makkah who had a lot of servants, and she had no jewelry other than silver. I said to her: Why does no one from among your servants have any jewelry other than the silver. She said: My grandfather was with the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and I also was with him and I had two golden earrings. The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Two metals of the Fire. So no-one from our house wears any jewelry other than silver.'[2]

Yūnus ibn Abī Isḥāq narrates from his mother al-ʿĀliyah bint Ayfaʿ ibn Sharāḥīl that she did ḥajj with Umm Maḥabbah. The two of them called on ʿĀʾishah, greeted her with *salām*, and asked her questions and heard ḥadīths from her.[3] Abū Ḥibbān narrates from his father from Maryam bint Ṭāriq that she told

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ (*Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, viii. 457) says: 'A large number of ḥadīth students took journeys and their motive would not be other than meeting Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah for his imāmah and the highness of his *isnād*.' [2]ABŪ NUʿAYM AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 407. [3]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 487.

him how she, among a group of Anṣārī women had called on ʿĀʾishah during the ḥajj and asked her about intoxicating drinks and their ingredients and containers. This is a long ḥadīth. Abū Ḥibbān says: 'My father narrated this ḥadīth to me when Maryam bint Ṭāriq was still alive.'[1]

Kathīr ibn Ziyād narrates from Mussah al-Azdiyyah that she said: I did ḥajj, then I called on Umm Salamah. I said: O *umm al-muʾminīn*, Samurah ibn Jundub commands the women to do the prayer missed on account of the menstrual period. She said: No, they are not to do the missed prayer. The women used to sit [i.e. not stand to pray] for forty days on account of post-natal bleeding. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – never ordered them to do the missed prayer of that time.'[2] Ismāʿīl ibn Abī Khālid narrated from his mother and his sister that both called on ʿĀʾishah during the ḥajj in Minā. 'A woman asked her: Is it allowed for me to cover my face while I am in the state of *iḥrām*? [ʿĀʾishah] lifted her scarf from her chest and put it over her head.'[3] She demonstrated in this way that only the head should be covered, not the face.

In later periods also, the ḥajj served as an opportunity to meet scholars and learn from them. One example is Maryam (also known as Umm Hānī, d. 871) bint al-Shaykh Nūr al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Qāḍī al-Quḍāt Taqī al-Dīn al-Hūrimiyyah. She was a granddaughter of the qāḍī Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Qayātī, and the mother al-ʿAllāmah Ṣayf al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, born on 15 Shaʿbān 678, a Friday, in Egypt. Her maternal grandfather was specially solicitous of her education and took her to Makkah, where she studied ḥadīth with ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Nashāwarī, Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭīʿ; Shihāb al-

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[1] *Ibid.*, 488. [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī waqt al-nufasāʾ*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *abwāb al-Ṭahārah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī kam tamkuthu al-nufasāʾ*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-nufasāʾ kam tajlis*; AL-DĀRIMĪ, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-marʾah al-ḥāʾiḍ tuṣallī fī thawbi-hā*. [3] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 494. [4] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *Ḍawʾ al-Lāmiʿ*, xii. 156.

Dīn Ẓahīrah and Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī. She continued her studies in Egypt.[4]

Women also undertook journeys that were expressly for knowledge. The famous expert of ḥadīth, much sought after for her high *isnād*, Shaykhah Umm al-Kirām Karīmah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥātim al-Marwaziyyah, (d. 463) travelled in the path of knowledge to Sarakhs, Isfahan, Jerusalem, and then to Makkah. Al-Dhahabī says: 'Her father was from Kushmīhan then travelled with her to Jerusalem and returned with her to Makkah [... ...] She studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with Abū l-Haytham al-Kushmīhanī; she studied also with Zāhir ibn Aḥmad Sarakhsī and ʿAbdullāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Bāmūyah al-Aṣbahānī.'[1]

Another scholar who made many journeys in the cause of knowledge of the religion is the shaykhah of high *isnād* Umm ʿAbd al-Karīm Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr ibn Muḥammad ibn Sahl al-Anṣārī al-Andalusī al-Balansī (?525–600). Her life's work contributed greatly to consolidating and extending the knowledge of Baghdad and the Islamic east before the catastrophe brought to this region by the Mongols. She was following in the wake of other great scholars who responded to the (earlier) disruption and destruction, wrought by the Crusaders and their occupation, by carrying 'the knowledge' westwards through Syria and the Levant to Egypt. It is improbable that Fāṭimah, who travelled so much and so widely, did not travel to the Ḥaramayn, but the sources do not record that she did the ḥajj. Her extraordinary toil (she was attending ḥadīth classes from the age of four or seven) and achievement are a fitting summary of this chapter. Following an overview of the venues where women (and men) studied ḥadīth, the different ways in which ḥadīths were passed from teachers to students, and the documentation that accompanied this, I present a brief sketch of the scholarly career of Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr. The map accompanying this sketch should give some sense, both of the physical effort of covering such distances at that time, and of the 'travel networks' among

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 233.

scholars. While the sources do not specify the route of scholars' journeys, the line of travel as shown follows well-established trade routes and so is fairly reliable – Saʿd al-Khayr, the father, was a merchant as well as a *muḥaddith*.

VENUES

The sources record that ḥadīth classes were sometimes held in shops whose owners were scholars of ḥadīth or interested in ḥadīth. This practice was very popular in the early period (there are examples from Kufah, Basrah, Baghdad, Wāsiṭ and Damascus), but there are also examples from later centuries.[1] Gardens or orchards and farms were also used for ḥadīth classes, but we will mention these in a later chapter. *Ribāṭ*s,[2] typically located on the edge of cities, functioned as retreats where people would go to deepen their knowledge and understanding, and strengthen their practice, of the religion. Ḥadīth classes were a core element of the teaching and well-attended, specially in the later period. Ribāṭ Qalanīsī (Damascus) was perhaps the most important one, where ḥadīth classes were held regularly and well attended by both men and women. Shaykh Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Sulamī's *ribāṭ* in Damascus was also popular: Shaykhah Rabīʿah bint ʿAlī ibn Maḥfūẓ ibn Ṣaṣrā studied *Ḥadīth Abī ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī* there in 572.[3] Khadījah bint Abī Bakr ibn Salmān al-Wāʿiẓ al-Ḥamawī studied, in a class of twenty students, *Aḥādīth Ṭālūt* of Abū ʿUthmān Ṭālūt ibn ʿAbbād al-Sayrafī al-Baṣrī (d. 238) with ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Abī Ghālib ibn Abī l-Maʿālī al-Surayjānī in a Damascus *ribāṭ* in 610.[4] Āsiyah bint Muḥam-

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[1]An example: Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAlam ibn Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥarrānī attended a class of 17 students on *K. al-Adab* of AL-BAYHAQĪ (d. 458) with Zayn al-Dīn Ayyūb ibn Niʿmah ibn Muḥammad ibn Niʿmah al-Maqdisī in his shop in the book-sellers' market in Damascus in 724. [2]*Ribāṭ*: originally a 'border stronghold or fortress'. The duty to guard the frontiers of Islam is strongly urged in several Prophetic ḥadīths; many eminent Companions served as sentries in the *ribāṭ*s. [3]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 305–06. [4]*Ibid.*, 119, 290.

mad ibn ʿAlī al-Dimashqī al-Iskāf studied *Amālī Ibn Bishrān* of Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn Muḥammad ibn Bishrān (d. 430) with Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn ʿĪsā Abū Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Maghārī in Ribāṭ al-Qalānisī in 703.[1]

However, in all periods, the principal venues where women studied ḥadīth were their own or relatives' houses, or the houses of others, and in mosques and schools.

Houses

Women's study of ḥadīth began in their homes if anyone from the family or from outside would teach them there. The teachers could be men or women. Sometimes the women students would attend classes in the teachers' houses, a practice that has lasted to our time. I give a few examples from the later periods, as found in the sources.

It is recorded that in Damascus in the year 685, the shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Āminah bint al-Imām al-Zāhid Taqī al-Dīn Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Faḍl al-Wāsiṭiyyah al-Dimashqiyyah (d.740), studied at home with her father *al-Fawāʾid al-Multafazah wa-l-Fawāʾid al-Multaqatah*, containing the ḥadīths of Abū l-Fatḥ ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Fatḥ al-Khiraqī (d. 579), selected by Muḥammad ibn Makkī ibn Abī l-Rajāʾ ibn al-Faḍl.[2] In Qāsyūn in Damascus in 718, Malikah bint al-Jamāl ibn ʿAlī studied *K. al-Shukr li-l-lāh taʿāla* of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā (d. 281) with her maternal grandfather Abū Bakr ibn Zayn al-Dīn Abī l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim al-Maqdisī in his house.[3] She studied, also with him and in his house, *K. al-Karam wa-l-jūd wa-l-sakhāʾ al-nufūs* of Abū Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Barjalānī (d. 238).[4]

Among those who attended classes in the houses of others is Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr ibn Yūnus al-Dimashqiyyah (d. 691). She studied the *Ḥadīth Quss Sāʿidah al-ʿIyāḍī* in the narration of Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muʿaddil al-Rāzī (d. 525), with Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥibatillāh al-Hamadānī. in

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[1] *Ibid.*, 142, 149. [2] *Ibid.*, 67–68, 149. [3] *Ibid.*, 57, 61. [4] *Ibid.*, 106–07.

the house of Ibn al-Hilāl in 635.[1] Another example is ʿAdliyyah bint Abī Bakr ibn ʿĀʾidh, the grandmother of Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-ʿAqrabānī. She studied *Forty Ḥadīths* of Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Aslam ibn Sālim al-Kindī al-Ṭūsī (d. 242) with Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Ḥazm in the house of a fellow-student, Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Sālim al-Khabbāz.[2] Sometimes student and teacher were both women and the teacher's house was the venue: for example, Khātūn bint ʿAbdillāh studied the sixth part of *al-Fawāʾid al-Muntaqāh al-gharāʾib ʿan al-shuyūkh al-ʿawālī*, narrated by Abī Ṭāhir Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mukhalliṣ, selected by Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Abī l-Fawāris, with the aged shaykhah Umm al-Fityān Ḥantamah bint al-Shaykh Abū l-Fatḥ al-Mufarrij ibn ʿAlī ibn Maslamah (d. *ca.* 630) in her house in Damascus in 628.[3] Then again the class might be held in a house other than that of either student or teacher: for example, Āminah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Rājih studied *Amālī Abī Bakr Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥārith al-Bāghindī al-Wāsiṭī* with Shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Hadiyyah bint ʿAlī ibn ʿAskar al-Baghdādī (d. 712) and Saʿd al-Dīn Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisī (d. 721) in the house of Shaykh Shams al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUmar Ibn ʿIwaḍ al-Maqdisī in 710.[4]

The scale of the women's efforts with ḥadīth study in private homes may be gauged from the list transcribed below of the women who, with Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭarkhān ibn Abī l-Ḥasan al-Dimashqī, were teaching a very large class in the house in Damascus of Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn in 627. The class was on some of the ḥadīths of al-Dibājī and others.[5] Most of the teachers were women – it is likely, as the names show, that they were family of the house-owner. I have not transcribed the

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[1]*Ibid.*, 75, 216. [2]*Ibid.*, 140, 418. [3]ṢĀLIḤ IBN GHĀLIB IBN ʿALĪ, '*al-Fawāʾid al-muntaqāh al-gharāʾib ʿan al-shuyūkh al-ʿawālī*', *Muqaddimah.* [4]*samāʿāt* at the end of *Sittah majālis min Amālī al-Bāghindī*, 220. [5]MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*, 131.

names of the students (there are too many), but I counted among them 24 women. A copy of the document itself is on the following page.

Umm Aḥmad Amīnah
Umm ʿAbdillāh Khadījah bt. Shaykh Abī ʿUmar b. Qudāmah
Umm Ḥamzah Sārah bt. ʿUbaydillāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah
Umm Ibrāhīm ʿAziziyyah bt. ʿAbd al-Hādī b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah
Umm Ibrāhīm Āsiyah bt. Shujah
Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bt. Aḥmad b. Ubaydullah b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Qudāmah
Umm ʿAbd al-Raḥīm bint ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī
Umm Muḥammad Ṣafiyyah and Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bt. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd b. ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisī
Umm ʿAbd al-Raḥīm bt. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī
Umm Sulaymān ʿĀʾishah
Umm Aḥmad Ṣafiyyah and Umm Muḥammad Fāṭimah bt. Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn b. Qudāmah
Umm Aḥmad Ṣafiyyah bt. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Qudāmah
Umm ʿAbdillāh Āsiyah and Umm Muḥammad Fāṭimah bt. Muḥammad b. Khalf b. Rajih
Umm ʿUmar Fāṭimah bt. ʿAbd al-Dāʾim b. Niʿmah
Umm Muḥammad Zaynab and Umm Aḥmad Āsiyah bt. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Ismāʿīl b. Manṣūr
Umm Aḥmad Zaynab and Umm ʿAbdillāh Fāṭimah bt. Makkī b. ʿAlī al-Ḥarrānī
Umm Muḥammad Ṣafiyyah and Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bt. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Saʿd b. ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisī

Names of women teachers, extracted and transcribed from the *samāʿ* shown on the next page.

*Samā*ᶜ of a very large class on some of the ḥadīths of al-Dībājī and others, held in the house in Damascus of Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn in 627.

صورة نص الإجازة

Mosques

Since the beginning of Islam mosques have had a central role in the transmission of knowledge and, formally and informally, served as schools for the community.[1] The Prophet's mosque in Madinah was the first madrasa in Muslim history. The Companions taught in the main mosques in Makkah, Madinah, Kufah, Basrah, Damascus, Jerusalem and Egypt. After them, the Successors did the same. Later Abū Ḥanīfah, his students and others scholars did likewise. Sometimes in a single mosque many teachers would hold classes, each at a different pillar of the mosque. Particularly well-known and revered teachers attracted huge numbers of students.[2]

Women attended the mosques as the men attended. Hind bint Usayd ibn Hudayr al-Anṣāriyyah learnt sūrah *Qāf* from hearing the Prophet recite it in the prayer. Ibn Jābir and ʿUthmān ibn Abī l-ʿĀtikah say: 'Umm al-Dardāʾ was an orphan under the guardianship of Abū l-Dardāʾ; she used to come to the mosques with Abī l-Dardāʾ in two garments [i.e. her head was not covered] and she prayed in the men's rows, and used to sit in the circles of the teachers learning the Qurʾān, until Abū l-Dardāʾ asked her one day to join the women's rows.[3]

One of the famous mosques where women regularly attended ḥadīth classes was Jāmiʿ al-Ḥanābilah, also known as al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in Ṣāliḥiyyah in Qāsyūn, Damascus. The building of the mosque started in 598. Dr. Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ has written a 720-page history of this mosque,[4] including in it records of the ḥadīth classes held there, with the names of

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[1]This is true of all communities, mainstream and minorities; for an interesting account of the use of mosques by women of the Ibbāḍī tradition, see Muḥammad ʿAlī DABŪZ, *Taʾrīkh al-maghrib al-kabīr*, 406–07, and Badriyyah bint Ḥamad AL-SHAQṢIYYAH, *al-Sīrah al-zakiyyah li-l-marʾah al-Ibbāḍiyyah*, 21. [2]For examples, see ʿAJJĀJ AL-KHAṬĪB, *Uṣūl al-ḥadīth*, 145. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *al-Taʾrīkh al-ṣaghīr*, i. 193; AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, iv. 278. [4]MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *Jāmiʿ al-Ḥanābilah al-Muẓaffarī* (Beirut: Dār al-Bashāʾir al-Islāmiyyah, in 1423/2002). (See photo, p. 96 below.)

the many women who studied different compilations of ḥadīth. Another prestigious teaching venue was the great Umayyad Mosque in Damascus: here too women students attended the same classes as men. For example: Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAlam ibn Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥarrānī studied, in a class of 20, *al-Majālis al-khamsah* of Abū Ṭāhir Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Silafī al-Aṣbahānī (d. 576) with Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar ibn Abī l-Faḍl ibn Naṣr al-Ḥamawī Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn in al-Jāmiʿ al-Amawī in 724;[1] Qaṭlū al-Rūmiyyah studied, in a class of 43, the third part of *K. al-Qaḍāʾ* of Abū l-Ḥārith Surayj ibn Yūnus ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Shuayh al-Balkhī (d. 235) with four teachers – Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn al-Zakī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Yūsuf al-Mizzī, ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Birzālī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ghanāʾim al-Muhandis and Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Raqqī in al-Jāmiʿ al-Amawī in 733.[2]

Another important mosque where women attended ḥadīth classes was the Jāmiʿ of Bayt al-Abbar (Syria). An example is Ruqayyah bint Dāwūd ibn ʿUmar ibn Yūsuf ibn Yaḥyā al-Shāfiʿī, who studied – in a class of 22 – *K. al-Karam wa-l-jūd wa sakhā al-nufūs* of Abū Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Barjalānī (d. 238) with Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Musallam ibn Salmān al-Irbalī, in 631.[3]

Schools

Women also attended ḥadīth classes in schools. The registers of attendance show that most such classes were attended by male and female students together, and their teachers, sometimes of the same class, were likewise both male and female.

Among the famous schools where the women attended ḥadīth classes in large numbers was al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah, founded by Shaykh Abū ʿUmar al-Maqdisī in 557 in Ṣāliḥiyyah in Damascus. Registers of attendance at this school have been

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[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 307, 106. [2]*Ibid.*, 93, 478. [3]*Ibid.*, 106, 307.

compiled in the history of it by Dr. Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ. Among the earliest documents relates to the year 604, when the famous teacher of ḥadīth Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad taught several books of ḥadīth including *Amālī al-Qāḍī Abī Yaʿlā al-Farrāʾ*. The class was attended by Khadījah bint al-Shaykh al-ʿImād Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisiyyah and other women in a class of 124 students.[1]

Another famous Damascus school of ḥadīth was Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Nūriyyah, where the shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Āminah bint al-Imām al-Zāhid Taqī al-Dīn Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Faḍl al-Wāsiṭiyyah studied *K. Tuḥfah ʿId al-Fitr* of Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Shāḥḥāmī al-Muʿaddil (d. 533) and *Ḥadīth Abū Ṭāhir al-Ziyādī* with ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Dāwūd ibn al-ʿAṭṭār al-Dimashqī in 724.[2]

Equally prestigious was al-Madrasah al-Murshidiyyah, where Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad ibn ʿĀlam ibn Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥarrānī studied *Majlis al-Biṭāqah* of Ḥamzah al-Kinānī (d. 357) with three great teachers of ḥadīth: the sultan Asad al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ayyūbī, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Dāwūd al-Jazarī al-Kurdī, and ʿImād al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh Raḍī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Maqdisī in 733.[3]

In another school, the Madrasah al-Mismāriyyah Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr ibn Ḥamzah al-Mardāwī studied, in a class of 19, *Ḥadīth Bakr ibn Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī*, in 688 – her teacher was Zaynab bint Makkī al-Ḥarrānī (d. 688).[4]

In the sixth century, perhaps the most important centre in Damascus for learning ḥadīth was Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyyah, where, later on, renowned scholars like Abū l-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī (d. 742) would teach. Women also attended classes there in large number. For example, Asmāʾ bint al-Imām Taqī al-Dīn

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[1]*Ibid.*, 138, 289. [2]*Ibid.*, 125, 149. [3]*samāʿāt* in *Majlis al-Biṭāqah* from *Amālī Ḥamzah al-Kinānī*, MS Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyyah, Damascus. [4]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 50, 215.

Abū ᶜAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jābir studied in a class of 28 the *Forty Ḥadīths* of Ḥasan ibn Sufyān ibn ᶜĀmir al-Shaybānī (d. 303), with the head of the school, Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Ḥajjāj Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī in 741.[1]

Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ḍiyāʾiyyah was another school of ḥadīth in Damascus. Here Shaykhah Asmāʾ bint Muḥammad ibn al-Kamāl ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisiyyah studied, in a class of 34, *Amālī al-Naqqāsh* with the most famous teacher of ḥadīth at that time, Fakhr al-Dīn ᶜAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Bukhārī in 660.[2]

WAYS OF RECEIVING ḤADĪTH

Ḥadīth experts distinguish eight ways of receiving a ḥadīth, with corresponding formulas that should prefix the transmission of the ḥadīth to someone else. Women made as good use of each of these eight ways as did men:

1 *Samāᶜ (hearing)*

The high tradition has been to hear the ḥadīth, together with the chain of narrators connecting it to the Prophet, spoken by the teacher. About *samāᶜ*, hearing the words of the teacher spoken from memory or from the teacher's book, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: 'This type is the highest of all according to the majority of the scholars. Whoever hears from the shaykh, he can say: "I heard (*samiᶜtu*) so-and-so say" or "he narrated to me (*ḥadath-nī*)" or "he narrated to us" or "he informed us (*akhbar-nā*)" or "he provided to us information (*anbāʾ-nā*)".'[3] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī affirms, from this range of expressions, that 'the highest expression is to say: "I heard".'[4]

When reliable books of ḥadīths were compiled, people started 'hearing' these books from their teachers, with the chain of authority going back to the authors of these books and from them to the Prophet. This way has continued to our time.

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[1]*Ibid.*, 64, 216. [2]*Ibid.*, 111, 216. [3]IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 80. [4]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 283.

Whether the books are small or large, the originals of the books (manuscripts) have a chain of references, starting with copyist(s) of the particular work and ending with its author(s); most also have an appendix documenting the occasions of *samāᶜ* with a list of those who attended. It is from such documentation that one realizes how commonly women attended these occasions, and often children also.

It was a controversy among scholars whether or at what age children could be counted as having 'heard' and therefore qualified to transmit ḥadīth. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī discusses the controversy in detail and then concludes: 'The majority of scholars hold that hearing of ḥadīth is allowed even for those who are less than this age [five]. And that is the correct opinion according to us.'[1] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: 'What the practice of the later people of ḥadīth has been established on [i.e. the general rule for them] is that they write for a five-year-old or more that "he heard" and for less than five that "he attended or he was brought [to the assembly]". What is proper in [this matter] is that the condition of each [individual] child be examined: if we find him above the condition of one who does not comprehend what is said, we will validate his hearing [...].' Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ then gives an example of someone who narrated what he heard when he was a child, was questioned about it, and his account of what he understood not found wanting.[2]

ᶜĀʾishah was certainly what we would call a child prodigy, and so her hearing of ḥadīths as a young girl[3] may be considered out of the ordinary. But the examples of young girls listening to ḥadīth and attending assemblies for that purpose, specially in the later centuries, are plentiful.

2 *al-ᶜArḍ*

The term *al-ᶜarḍ* (literally, 'offering') refers to reading out the text to the teacher. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: 'It is the same whether you read out, or someone else reads and you are hearing [it being

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[1]*Ibid.*, 54–56. [2]IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 79. [3]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 58.

read out], or whether you hear [it being read out] from a book or from your memory, or whether the shaykh knows by heart what is being read out to him or he does not know but is [himself] holding his original or another reliable person in the class is holding it.'[1] Al-Khaṭīb says: 'Most *fuqahā*ʾ and all the imāms of the knowledge [i.e. ḥadīth] and *āthār* hold that reading to the teacher is like hearing from him.'[2] Imāms Mālik ibn Anas and Sufyān al-Thawrī also considered the reading by the teacher or the reading to him as the same.[3]

The best and most usual expression to indicate reception through *ʿarḍ* is to say: 'I read to so-and-so'; or 'it was read to so-and-so and I was hearing and he approved it'. One may also use the same expression as for *samāʿ* on condition of proper clarification: 'He narrated to us by our reading to him' or 'he informed us by our reading to him'.[4] In later periods people used 'he narrated to us' for *samāʿ* and 'he informed us' for *ʿarḍ*. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ cites Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Tamīmī al-Jawharī as saying: 'This is the opinion of most people of ḥadīth, whose number cannot be counted. They made "he informed us" an indicator of saying "I read to him".'[5]

3 Ijāzah

Ijāzah is the teacher's formal permission to someone to narrate from him all of his narrations or his writings. The *ijāzah* can be of several kinds. (a) The teacher gives permission to a specified person for a specified thing, with words to the effect that 'I have given you permission [to transmit] such-and-such a book or what is contained in my list'. This is the highest type of *ijāzah*, and the later scholars are unanimous in allowing it.[6]
(b) The teacher gives permission to a specified person for an unspecified thing, meaning: 'I have permitted to you all my narrations.' The majority among traditionists and jurists allow it.[7]

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[1]IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 82. [2]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 259–60. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *ʿIlm*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l-ʿilm*. [4]IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 83. [5]*Ibid.* [6]*Ibid.*, 90–92. [7]*Ibid.*, 92.

(c) That the teacher gives permission without specifying who or what is permitted; something like: 'I have given permission to all Muslims, or to everyone who has lived [and so could have heard from me] within my lifetime.' This kind of *ijāzah āmmah* is disputed and usually disallowed without some limiting attribute.[1]

About *ijāzah*s in general, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says: 'The people differ regarding *ijāzah* of ḥadīths. Some of them allow it, others do not. Those who accept it are more numerous. Then, of those who accept it, some differ regarding the obligation to act upon those ḥadīths [that have reached them in this way]. The Ẓāhirīs and some later scholars hold that it is not obligatory to act upon the contents of these ḥadīths because they are like unconnected chains, or they are like narrations from obscure people. The majority of the scholars say that it is obligatory to act upon them.'[2]

4 *al-Munāwalah*

Munāwalah (presentation) is that the teacher hands his original or what is in its place, to the student, or the student brings the original to the teacher, who then says words to the effect: 'This is my ḥadīth or my book, so narrate it'. The condition is that the teacher transfers control, either by making the student the new owner or by lending the text to him so he can copy from it and compare with it. The majority of earlier and later people affirm that it is not allowed, for narrating ḥadīths got through *munāwalah*, to use 'he narrated to us' or 'he informed us', unless the terms are sufficiently defined. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: 'The correct and chosen opinion, on which the practice of the majority of scholars is [based] – and it is preferred by the people of piety and accuracy – is that they disallow using the expressions "he narrated to us" or "informed us' or similar to that, unconditionally. Rather, one should detail it, so he should say, "So-and-so has informed us through *munāwalah* or *ijāzah*" or like that.'[3]

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[1]*Ibid.* [2]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 311. [3]*Ibid.*, 101.

5 *al-Mukātabah*

The term *mukātabah* means correspondence whereby the teacher transmits a written copy of his ḥadīth to the student; if combined with explicit permission to narrate the ḥadīth from him, it becomes like an *ijāzah*.[1] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says: 'Many great scholars of ḥadīth like Layth ibn Saʿd and Manṣūr allow in *mukātabah* use of the expression "he narrated to us" or "he informed us". But the preferred way is of those who say "So-and-so wrote to me". This is the correct way and appropriate to the people of caution. Similarly if he says "he informed [us] by writing".'[2] An early example of a woman's using correspondence is Umm ʿAbdillāh bint Abī Hāshim. She wrote to the Companion, al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr (d. 65) asking him what had passed on the tongue of Zayd ibn Khārijah in his last moments of life. In effect she was asking for a report of what al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr 'heard', and he wrote her a detailed letter in reply.[3]

6 *al-Iʿlām*

The term *iʿlām* is used where the teacher informs the student that this ḥadīth or this book is his hearing or narration from so-and-so without explicitly permitting that student to narrate it further.[4] Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says, after mentioning the difference of opinion among scholars about this: 'The preferred opinion is what has been mentioned by many scholars of ḥadīth that narration of [ḥadīth received like] that is not allowed.'[5]

7 *al-Waṣiyyah*

Waṣiyyah is when the shaykh by a will at the time of his death or by other writing consigns his original(s) to a specific individual. Some scholars have allowed narration on the authority of a *waṣiyyah*, but the majority, in the absence of explicit permission (i.e. an *ijāzah*) from the shaykh, do not allow it.[6]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 103. [2] *Ibid.*, 104. [3] Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī AL-MAʿĀFIRĪ, *al-Hadāʾiq al-ghannāʾ fī akhbār al-nisāʾ*, 83–84. [4] IBN AL-ṢALĀḤ, *Muqaddimah*, 104. [5] *Ibid.*, 105. [6] *Ibid.*, 105–06.

8 al-Wijādah

Wijādah (literally, 'finding') is a person's discovering a ḥadīth or book, recognizing its author by the handwriting, then saying: 'I found in the handwriting of So-and-so...' In this case he is not allowed to use the expression 'So-and-so informed us' unless he has an *ijāzah*.[1] An example of *wijādah*, from the time of the Companions' Successors, is that Hammām ibn Yaḥyā narrated that the mother of Sulaymān al-Yashkurī brought out his book, and it was read out to Thābit, Qatādah, Abū Bishr, al-Ḥasan and Muṭarrif. Then they, except for Thābit, narrated the whole of that; Thābit narrated from it only one ḥadīth.[2] Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbdillāh ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shāfiᶜī says: Samānah bint Ḥamdān narrated to me saying: 'I found in the book of my grandfather al-Waḍḍāḥ ibn Ḥassān, where he says: ᶜAmr ibn Shimar has narrated to us from Abū Jaᶜfar Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī, from ᶜAlī ibn Ḥusayn, from Jābir ibn ᶜAbdillāh, that when the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa-sallam* – sat down on the pulpit he would say...'[3]

Documentation of the *samāᶜ* and *ijāzah*

It has long been an established tradition among the scholars of ḥadīth to preserve *samāᶜ*s and *ijāzah*s. These documents are a precious resource. The *samāᶜ*s, typically found appended to the book or written into its margins, contain a statement of the date and venue of the assembly, the name of the person(s) keeping the record and other details; description(s) of the teacher(s), a list of those who attended with their titles, *kunyah*s, names and genealogy; also comments such as who and how many attended all the sessions in a course of study without missing any, those who missed something, even those who were dozing or talking in class. The reproductions should give some idea of what these *samāᶜ*s look like; they vary greatly in style, some being very formal and written in an accomplished

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[1] *Ibid.*, 106. [2] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 354. [3] Id., *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 440–41.

hand, others in the style of notes squeezed in where place could be found and less easy to read.

To get an *ijāzah* a common practice was to circulate a formal letter of request or *istidʿāʾ*. Below, I give partial translation of two *samāʿ*s mentioning the shaykhah, Umm Muḥammad Āminah bint Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭiyyah; in one, she is recorded as *attending*, the other as *hearing*. She was born in about 664.[1]

She attended, when she was three years old, a class on *Forty Ḥadīths* of ʿAbd al-Khāliq ibn Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir al-Shaḥḥāmī (d. 549), compiled by ʿAlī al-Shahrastānī, with the shaykh, Badr al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Saʿd ibn Aḥmad al-Kirmānī al-Naysābūrī, who heard the book from Abū Bakr al-Qāsim ibn Abī Saʿd al-Ṣaffār, in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in Mt. Qāsyūn on Saturday 25 Ṣafar 667 with the reading of Najm al-Dīn Mūsā ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Shaqrāwī, and he gave her permission.[2]

She heard *Juzʾ Ḥanbal ibn Isḥāq* from her father Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Faḍl al-Wāsiṭī, by his hearing from al-Shaykh Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Barākāt ibn Abī l-Saʿādāt al-Harīmī, by his narration from Abū Shākir Yaḥyā ibn Yūsuf al-Saqlāṭūnī, by his hearing from Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Shādhān al-Baghdādī al-Bazzāz, from Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Sammāk, from Abū ʿAlī Ḥanbal ibn Isḥāq al-Shaybānī. That was on Sunday 17 Jumādā al-Ūlā 673 at the house of the shaykh in Mt. Qāsyūn in Damascus.[2]

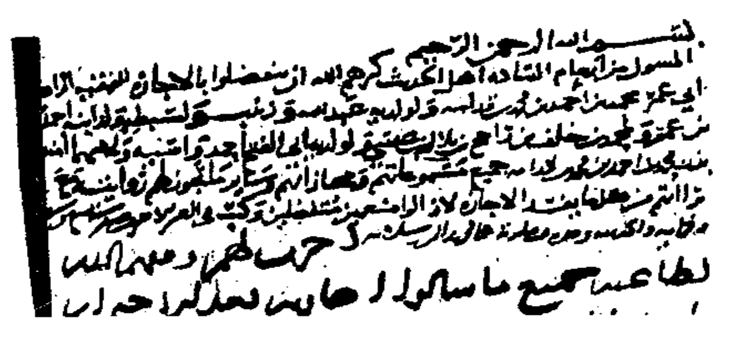
In both translations above, the names of others attending the class are omitted. Next, translation of an *istidʿāʾ* and *ijāzah* document (see photocopy on the next page):[3]

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.
It is requested from the favour of the master of the people of ḥadīth, – may God increase their number – to grant *ijāzah* to the *faqīh* Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah, for his

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[1]IBN RĀFIʿ, *al-Wafayāt*, i. 343. [2]*samāʿāt* in *al-Arbaʿūn* of *ʿAbd al-Khāliq ibn Ẓāhir al-Shāḥḥāmī*, *takhrīj* al-Sharastānī, MS Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyah, Damascus. [2]*Samāʿāt* at the end of *Juzʾ Ḥanbal*. [3]Translated from the photocopy of the *ijāzah* in MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*, 97.

son ʿAbdullāh, his daughter Zaynab, the son of his son Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar, for Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Rājiḥ ibn Bilāl ibn ʿĪsā, for his son Abū l-Fatḥ Aḥmad, daughter of Āsiyah, and for their mother Āminah bint Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah, for all the ḥadīths that they received by hearing and then received by *ijāzah*, and the rest of what is allowed for them to narrate, without them [the shaykhs, giving permission and] being responsible for whatever invalidates the *ijāzah*. May they continue doing service [to the people]. Written in the last ten [days] of Ṣafar in 579. And praise is due to God alone, and His Mercy on Muḥammad the Prophet and His peace.



بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

Istidʿāʾ and first words of the *ijāzah* translated above. (Detail of p. 97 MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*.)

I have given them *ijāzah*, may God guide them to His obedience, in all that they asked *ijāzah* for, after avoiding what can weaken an *ijāzah*. May God guide us and them to what pleases Him. Written by Muḥammad ibn Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Ṣaqr on 24 Ṣafar, 579 in Damascus, while praising God, Glorified is He, and praying for mercy and peace on our master Muḥammad, his family and his Companions.

Like that I [too] say [that] I have given them – may God increase their number, and guide them [to] what pleases Him in this world and the next world – permission for all my *masmūʿāt* and *ijāzāt* on the way of the *salaf*, may God have mercy on them. It is written by Barākāt ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ṭāhir ibn Barākāt al-Khushūʿī al-Qurashī. That was on Wednesday 12 Rabīʿ al-Ākhir 579.

Querying ijāzahs

The scholars discussed and queried *ijāzah*s both assiduously and responsibly. They did not allow narration unless the *ijāzah* was confirmed. Here is an example:

The great scholar of ḥadīth Abū l-Fatḥ al-Yaʿmurī ibn Sayyid al-Nās [d. 734] was asked: Who gave *ijāzah* to Ruqayyah bint Ismāʿīl ibn al-Anmāṭī [d. 676]?
Then he answered: As for Ruqayyah bint Ismāʿīl al-Anmāṭī, I have got some *ijāzah*s with her father's handwriting in the year 612 and around that [year]. In none of these *ijāzah*s, is she mentioned. Rather in those *ijāzah*s are mentioned her brother Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Anmāṭī, our Shaykh and his sister Zaynab. There are *ijāzah*s of the year 614 where she [i.e. Ruqayyah] is mentioned. That means she was born around that time. And I have seen in the handwriting of ʿĪsā al-Anmāṭī [so] that I do not have any doubt of it:

> 'It is requested from the masters, the imāms, to grant *ijāzah* for the people for whom the *ijāzah* is requested in the page opposite to this, and for Ruqayyah bint Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Anmāṭī. Everyone narrates all that is valid from their narration and words, and for them is the reward.'

It was dated at the end of Jumāda al-Ūlā year 614, and similarly, they grant *ijāzah* to Ṣāfī and Jumūʿah, both brothers and slaves of Ibn al-Anmāṭī with the group, whatever has been asked for, according to the conditions of *ijāzah*. May God benefit all thereby. Amen. Below that is:

> 'I gave them *ijāzah*, may God guide them, to narrate what they have asked with the condition of its validity. Written by ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Faḍl al-Anṣārī.'

Below that is:

> Like that says Muḥammad ibn Ḥibatullāh, ibn Muḥammad ibn Muʿammil al-Shīrāzī on 26 Muḥarram year 615 in Damascus.

Then Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Sayyid al-Nās records other *ijāzah*s for Ruqayyah with full documentation and dates to make it clear that she had *ijāzah* from those shaykhs.[1]

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[1]Muḥammad AL-RĀWANDĪ, *Abū l-Fatḥ al-Yaʿmarī: al-Ajwibah*, ii. 229–32.

FĀṬIMAH BINT SAᶜD AL-KHAYR (?525–600)

Fāṭimah's father, Saᶜd al-Khayr, was himself a scholar. One of his eminent students, al-Samᶜānī (author of *al-Ansāb*), describes him as *muḥaddith*, *faqīh*, and righteous. He travelled from his home-city of Valencia, at the western end of the Islamic world, all the way to China. The reason for his migration is not given. It is most probable that as Muslim power in Spain waned further, Christian rulers were emboldened to make life for their Muslim subjects increasingly intolerable and for learned, pious Muslims impossible. Al-Samᶜānī[1] says that Saᶜd al-Khayr faced much hardship, crossed many seas and, through trade, attained considerable wealth. He studied with many teachers in Baghdad, Isfahan, Hamadan and other places. He had several daughters (then, much later, a son) and was most particular about their attending ḥadīth classes, travelling with them extensively and repeatedly to different teachers. He also taught them himself.

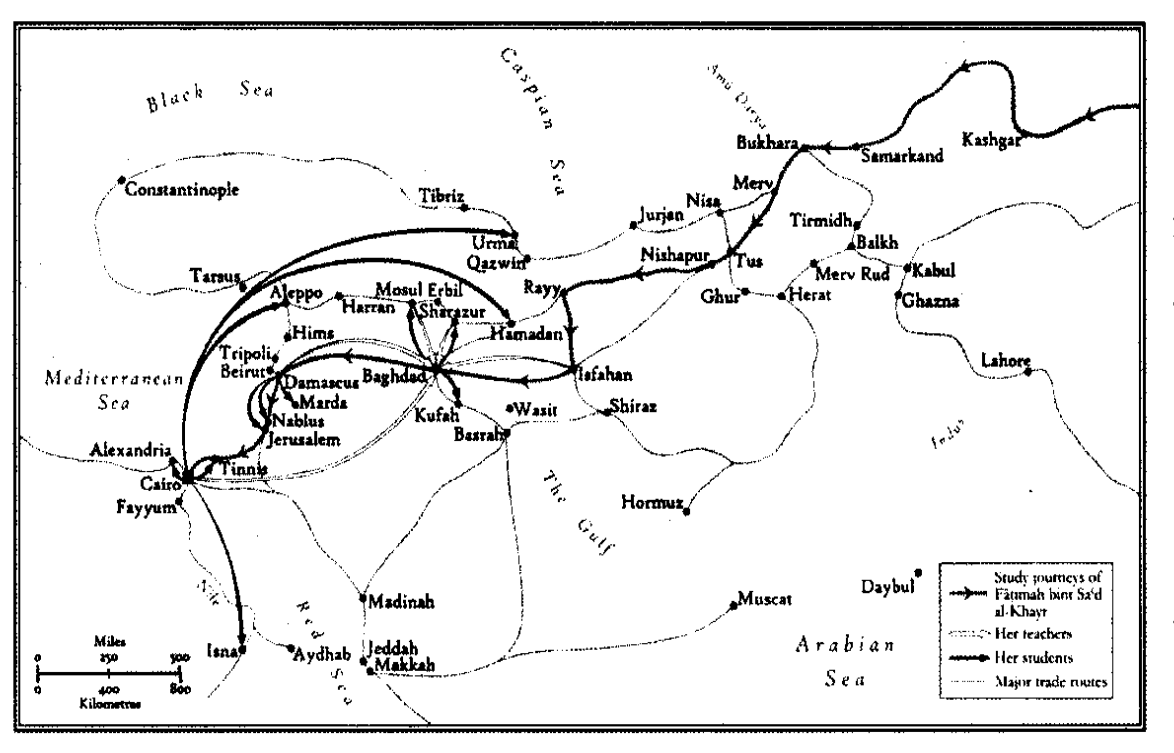
Fāṭimah's year of birth is given as 525; 522 is more likely.[2] The place is given only as 'in China', i.e. east of Kashghar. She began very young: a *samāᶜ* records her hearing al-Dāraquṭnī's *K. al-Duᶜafā al-matrūkīn* in Dhū l-Qaᶜdah 529; a *samāᶜ* at the end of a copy of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *al-Jāmiᶜ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiᶜ* records her hearing it in Rabīᶜ al-Awwal and Rabīᶜ al-Ākhir 529. Al-Mundhirī notes that Saᶜd al-Khayr took her several times to the same teachers to consolidate her knowledge.[3]

In Isfahan she studied with Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah, main narrator in her time of the compilations of al-Ṭabarānī. Fāṭimah Saᶜd al-Khayr heard from her all of *Muᶜjam al-kabīr* (printed now in 37 volumes) and *Muᶜjam al-ṣaghīr* (2 volumes).

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[1] AL-SAMᶜĀNĪ, *al-Ansāb*, *in loco* 'al-balansī'. [2] IBN NUQṬAH, *al-Taqyīd*, 409. [3] AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *Takmilah*, ii. 15.

The study journeys of Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr



In Baghdad, where it appears she was settled for a time, among her principal teachers were Abū l-Qāsim Ḥibatullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn, main narrator of Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*, Abū l-Qāsim Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir al-Shaḥḥāmī, Abū Ghālib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥasān ibn al-Bannā', and others travelling to the capital. The list of the books she mastered would be long indeed. After marriage, she moved with her husband to Damascus and from there to Cairo.[1] Much of her teaching career was based in those two cities, and many scholars travelled there expressly to study with her.

Fāṭimah married Zayn al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī Ibrāhīm ibn Najā, one of her father's students who clearly impressed. He was born in Damascus in 508, and described as pious, noble, high-minded, of praiseworthy character, exceptionally eloquent. He was called *al-Wāʿiẓ* for his fame as a preacher, and *al-Ra'īs* for the social standing he enjoyed through relations with the Ayyubid court: he served as secretary for Nūr al-Dīn. The historian Abū Shāmā records that he was held in high esteem by both Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī (famous for recovering Jerusalem) and his successor. Yet, despite the great wealth that had come to him, al-Dhahabī reports that Ibn Najā, died so poor that his friends paid for his shroud.[2] There is no account of how he unburdened himself of so vast a fortune. Perhaps he was very generous in giving it away and successfully concealed the fact. He died in 599, a year before Fāṭimah.

Al-Dhahabī says: 'She saw much honour and wealth.' Yet, neither father, nor husband, nor Fāṭimah herself appear to have been distracted by that wealth into any indiscipline or indolence. To the end of her life, she remained active in diffusing her vast body of knowledge. Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl, later famed as Khaṭīb Mardā, carried to his home city her teaching of *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā*,[3] *Ḥadīth al-Khiraqī*,[4] *Ziyādāt Amālī Imām Mālik*,[5] and

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 591–600), 461. [2] Id., *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, xxi. 393–96. [3] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-mu'assas*, i. 482–83. [4] *Ibid.*, i. 263. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 114.

other works. Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAzzūn[1] read with her al-Ṭabarānī's *Muʿjam al-kabīr*, as did Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī,[2] who carried it to Damascus. ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn ʿAllāq studied with her *Ḥadīth al-Qudūrī*,[3] *Fawāʾid Abū Naṣr*,[4] and *Juzʾ al-Ghiṭrīfī*.[5] His home-city was in Egypt. Her knowledge of ḥadīth passed to Tinnīs in Egypt through Abū l-Qāsim ibn Ḥusayn al-Qurashī al-Tinnīsī;[6] to Hamadan through the jurist Abū Muḥammad Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad al-Hamadānī; through Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Qāsim al-Jītī to Jīt (near Nablus).[7] It is not practical to try to list here all her students or all the places they came from and returned to with her teaching. The entry for Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr in the Dictionary that I have compiled of the *Muḥaddithāt* runs to 20 pages.

She died in Cairo in the year 600, at the age of 78. She was buried below the mountain called Muqaṭṭam.[8]



Courtyard, al-Jāmiʿ al-Ḥanābilah al-Muẓaffarī, Damascus.
(Photo: Yahya Michot)

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[1] *Ibid.* [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 383–84. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 322. [4] *Ibid.*, i. 329. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 212. [6] AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *Takmilah*, ii. 50. [7] *Ibid.*, iii. 283. [8] *Ibid.*, ii. 14.

Chapter 4

The women's teachers

The women were not restricted to learning from only other women. It appears rather that they studied with whoever they had the opportunity to study with. The minimum required of women in looking for teachers is well set out by Ibn al-Jawzī. He says:

The woman has [the same] duty as the man; so it is [incumbent] upon her to learn about her duties and obligations until she is firm and sure how to perform them. If she has a father or brother, or husband or any blood relation who can teach her the obligations of the religion and instruct her in how to do her duties, that will suffice her. If there is no one there [among close family] she must ask others [outside the family] and learn from them. If she is able to find a woman who can teach her, she will learn from her. If not, she will learn from the old and elderly men without privacy: and she will suffice with what is necessary [for her to know]. [After that] whenever any new situation arises about her religion she should ask and not be shy; for God does not shy from the truth.[1]

For women who desired to go further or to specialize, it was permitted to study with younger teachers if the teaching was done in an open way, within the Sharīʿah bounds. Typically, the women would begin with the knowledgeable women or men of the household, then continue with local teachers outside the family circle, and then to such teachers as might be visiting the locality, and finally teachers in other towns and cities. Some details follow in the examples below. The examples have been

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[1] IBN AL-JAWZĪ (d. 597), *Aḥkām al-nisāʾ*, 131.

chosen principally to demonstrate that this practice was consistent in all periods and in different regions.

TEACHERS WITHIN THE FAMILY CIRCLE

From the outset women learnt ḥadīth from their mothers – the Companions taught their daughters, who were their Successors. ʿAbd Rabbih ibn al-Ḥakam has narrated from the daughter of Ruqayqah from her mother that she said: 'When the Prophet – *ṣalla-l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – came seeking victory at Ṭāʾif, he came to me [...]'[1] and then she mentioned the whole ḥadīth. Ḥubābah bint ʿAjlān also got ḥadīth from her mother: She has narrated from Ḥubābah bint ʿAjlān from her mother, Umm Ḥafṣ, from Ṣafiyyah bint Jarīr, from Umm Ḥakīm bint Waddāʿ that she said: 'I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla-l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – saying: The prayer of a father passes the curtain',[2] meaning that it reaches God directly, without being mediated or impeded. Similarly, in later centuries women learnt from their mothers: Altī bint Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad learnt ḥadīth from her mother, the great *muḥaddithah*, Umm Muḥammad ʿĀʾishah bint Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn ʿĪsā al-Ḥanafī (d. 793). One of the ḥadīth works that she studied with her was *Fawāʾid* of Abū Aḥmad al-Ḥākim (d. 378) in Muḥarram 793 in the Madrasah al-Khatūniyyah al-Burāniyyah.[3]

Among women from the earlier period who studied with their fathers are: Buhaysah al-Fuzāriyyah (*tābiʿiyyah*), who narrated from her father from the Prophet;[4] Jabalah bint Muṣaffaḥ al-ʿĀmiriyyah (*tābiʿiyyah*), who narrated from her father from ʿAlī;[5] and Ḥafṣah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq.[6] In the later centuries: Hind bint Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq (5th c.)

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[1] IBN AL-ATHĪR, *Usd al-ghābah*, v. 454. [2] IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Duʿāʾ*, bāb *daʿwat al-wālid wa daʿwat al-maẓlūm*. [3] See Abū Aḥmad AL-ḤĀKIM, *Fawāʾid* (*mā ittaṣala ilay-nā*), 100. [4] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 138. [5] IBN ḤAJAR, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, xii. 434. [6] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 153.

studied with her father;[1] Umm Salamah Āminah studied with her father, Abū Saʿīd Ḥasan ibn Isḥāq ibn Bulbul al-Naysābūrī (d. 348);[2] Waraʿ studied with her father Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Khallāl (5th c.)[3] Luʾluʾah studied the whole *al-Arbaʿīn ḥadīth min al-musāwāt mustakhrajah ʿan thiqāt al-ruwāt* of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAsākir, with her famous father, Shaykh ʿImād al-Dīn ibn ʿAsākir al-Dimashqī in 718;[4] Amat al-Raḥīm al-Yūnīniyyah (d. 739) studied the women's ḥadīth from *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal with her father, the great *muḥaddith* and jurist Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Yūnīnī (8th c.);[5] in India the great scholar of ḥadīth and *fiqh*, Khadījah al-Dihlawiyyah (early 14th c.) studied ḥadīth and other subjects with her father, Imām Muḥammad Isḥāq al-Dihlawī (d. 1262).

There are women who received knowledge of ḥadīth from their grandmothers. For example, Āminah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā narrated from her grandmother Umm Laylā that she said: 'We pledged allegiance to the Prophet – *ṣalla-l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam*.'[6] The *muḥaddithah* and jurist Fāṭimah bint al-Mundhir ibn al-Zubayr got many ḥadīths from her grandmother Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr, which she then passed on to her students.[7] A later *muḥaddithah*, Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr ibn Ḥamzah al-Mardāwī studied *Ḥadīth Abū Bakr ibn Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī* with her grand-mother, Zaynab bint Makkī ibn ʿAlī ibn Kāmil al-Ḥarrānī (the teacher of al-Mizzī, Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Dhahabī) in Madras-ah al-Mismariyyah in Jumādah al-Ūlā 688.[8] She also studied other books with her.[9] Umm al-Khayr bint ʿAbdillāh Muḥam-mad ibn Ẓahīrah al-Qurashī studied *Nuskhah Abī Muʿāwiyah*, *Nuskhah Bakkār ibn Qutaybah* and *al-Maṣābīḥ* of al-Baghawī

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[1]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh Dimashq*, (*tarājim al-nisāʾ*) 436. [2]See the account of al-Ḥasan ibn Isḥāq ibn Bulbul in IBN AL-ʿADĪM, *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, 2295–98. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 561–70), 402. [4]See IBN ʿASĀKIR, *al-Arbaʿīn ḥadīth min al-musāwāt mustakhrajah ʿan al-ruwāt*, 228. [5]AL-DHAHABĪ *Mujʿam al-shuyūkh*, i. 189. [6]IBN ḤIBBĀN, *K. al-Thiqāt*, iv. 63. [7]*Ibid.*, v. 301. [8]See LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿat al-Dimashqiyyah*, 50, 215. [9]See *ibid.*, 139, 215.

(d. 494) with her maternal grandmother, Umm al-Ḥasan bint Aḥmad ibn Qāsim al-Ḥarāzī in Makkah in 762.[1]

Among the women who received ḥadīth from their grandfathers is Munyah bint ʿUbayd ibn Abī Barazah al-Aslamī. Umm al-Aswad has narrated from Munyah bint ʿUbayd that she narrated from her grandfather Abū Barazah that he said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla-l-lāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam* – said: Whoever consoles a woman who has lost her child, God will grant him a cloak to wear in paradise.'[2] Umm Abān Hind bin al-Wāziʿ ibn Zāriʿ also received ḥadīth from her grandfather, the Companion, Zāriʿ ibn ʿĀmir al-ʿAbdī.[3] Duḥaybah and Ṣafiyyah, daughters of ʿUlaybah al-ʿAnbariyyah, got ḥadīth from their grandfather Ḥarmalah ibn ʿAbdillāh al-ʿAnbarī, a Companion, and also from their father's grandmother, Qaylah bint Makhramah, another Companion.[4] Sitt al-ʿArab bint Muḥammad ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Bukhārī (d. 690) studied a lot of books of ḥadīth with her grandfather Abū l-Ḥasan Fakhr al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn al-Bukhārī (d. 767, a teacher of al-Mizzī and Ibn Taymiyyah). Among the books she studied with him are: the *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *al-Sunan al-kubrā* of al-Bayhaqī and *Fawāʾid Sammūyah*.[5]

Marriage did not stop women from continuing their study of the *Sunnah*. Indeed, some of them turned to their husbands to improve their store of knowledge (examples of husbands learning from wives will come in a later chapter). Buqayrah, wife of the great Companion Salmān al-Fārisī received and narrated ḥadīth from him.[6] So also did Jumānah bint al-Musayyab ibn Najabah, wife of the Companion Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān.[7] Similarly, Zaynab bint Kaʿb ibn ʿUjrah, wife of the famous scholar among the Companions, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, received ḥadīth from him, copiously recorded in the major

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[1]IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 1594. [2]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *ākhar fī faḍl al-taʿziyah*. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, xii. 485. [4]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 168. [5]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 375. [6]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, iv. 92. [7]IBN MĀKŪLĀ (d. 475), *al-Ikmāl fī rafʿ al-irtiyāb*, ii. 532.

ḥadīth compilations.[1] Among the Successors, Umm al-Dardāʾ al-Ṣughrā received many ḥadīths from her husband Abū l-Dardāʾ. Ṣafiyyah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Makhzūmiyyah al-Makkiyyah heard directly from her husband *Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah*, in Rabīʿ al-Awwal 743.[2] Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ bint Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭiyyah studied *Amālī Ibn Bishrān* of Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn Bishrān (d. 430) with her husband Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn ʿĪsā ibn Abī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Maghārī al-Ḥanbalī in Ribāṭ al-Qalānisī on 22 Ṣafar 703.[3] Zaynab bint Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad studied *Ḥadīth* of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī (d. 345) with her husband Qāḍī Taqī al-Dīn Sulaymān ibn Ḥamzah al-Maqdisī in his house in 715.[4] Dunyā bint Ḥasan ibn Balbān studied *Ḥadīth Abū Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Walīd al-Kilabī* (d. 396) with her husband the great *muḥaddith* and historian ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Birzālī in 728.[5]

Women received ḥadīth also from other members of the family and household – brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles, on the father's or the mother's side – and slaves received ḥadīth from their masters or mistresses. The great *muḥaddithah* and jurist, Umm Hudhayl Ḥafṣah bint Sīrīn, sister of the renowned Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, received ḥadīth from her master Anas ibn Mālik.[6] Hishām ibn Ḥassān from Iyās ibn Muʿāwiyah saying: 'I did not meet anyone whom I can prefer over Ḥafṣah'. He was asked: 'What about Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn?' He said: 'As for me I do not prefer anyone over her. She learnt the Qurʾān by heart when she was twelve years old.'[7] Though born a slave, Ḥafṣah bint Sīrīn made the best of the opportunity presented to her and became one of the most important scholars of her time. Some considered her superior to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Her ḥadīths from her master are in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. For

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[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah fī l-tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, viii. 97. [2] TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn*, vi. 41. [3] See LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 142, 319. [4] *Ibid.*, 110. 312. [5] *Ibid.*, 130, 304. [6] IBN ḤIBBĀN, *K. al-Thiqāt*, iv. 194. [7] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 152.

example, ʿĀṣim narrates from her from Anas that the Prophet said: 'Plague is martyrdom for every Muslim.'[1]

TEACHERS OF THE LOCALITY

After learning within the near circle, the women would study with other teachers in their town. Again, the example was set by the first generations of Muslims: the Successors in Madinah narrated from the Companions, including wives of the Prophet. Similarly, in every city where the Muslims settled, the women received knowledge of the *Sunnah* from the scholars in that locality. The first three centuries are full of examples, but here I will mention examples from the later centuries:

Jumuaʿh bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Maḥmiyyah of Nishapur received the ḥadīth from the teachers of her town.[2] Shaykhah Asmāʾ bint Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Dimashqiyyah (d. 595) studied ḥadīth with the judge of her home town Abū l-Mufaḍḍal Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Qurashī and Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn Ḥamzah al-Sulamī.[3] Umm al-Rajāʾ Zubaydah bint Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad of Isfahan studied ḥadīth with the teachers of her town, Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dhakwānī, Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl al-Thaqafī and Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad al-Simsār.[4] The famous tenth century ḥadīth expert from Baghdad, Shuhdah bint al-Muḥaddith Abī Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj ibn ʿUmar al-Dīnawārī, studied ḥadīth with the famous teachers of Baghdad, Ṭirād ibn Muḥammad al-Zaynabī, Ibn Ṭalḥah al-Niʿālī, Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb ibn al-Baṭir, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Yūsuf, al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Salmān al-Daqqāq, Thābit Bundar, Abū Yāsir Aḥmad, Abū l-Wāḥid ibn ʿAlwān al-Shaybānī, Jaʿfar al-Sarrāj, Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Harīsah, Manṣūr ibn Ḥayd al-Naysābūrī, Abū l-Barakāt

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭibb*, bāb *mā yudhkaru fī al-ṭāʿūn*. [2] AL-ṢAYRAFĪNĪ (d. 641), *al-Muntakhab min kitāb al-Siyāq li taʾrīkh Nasyābūr*, 183. [3] AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *al-Takmilah li-wafayāt al-naqlah*, i. 314. [4] AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Muntakhab min Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, iii. 1883.

Ḥamd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Wakīl, Abū Ghālib al-Bāqillānī and a sizeable group of others.[1] Zāhidah bint Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Mawsilī al-Khabbāz studied *Intikhāb al-Ṭabarānī li-ibni-hi ʿalā Ibn Fāris* with 21 teachers in 718.[2] ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī the great *muḥaddithah* of her time studied with Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *K. Dhamm al-kalām* of al-Harawī, *Juzʾ Abī l-Jahm*, *Amālī Ibn al-Naṣrī*, *Musnad ʿUmar* of al-Najjād, *al-Arbaʿūn al-Ājurriyyah*, *Musnad ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd*; with Qāḍī Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī: *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*; with ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Muʿaẓẓam ʿĪsā al-Ayyūbī: the whole of the *Sīrah* by Ibn Isḥāq in the rescension of Ibn Hishām, and *Juzʾ al-Biṭāqah*.[3]

VISITING TEACHERS

Women also received ḥadīth from teachers visiting their towns. As before, the practice has the best precedent. On her way back from the Battle of the Camel, ʿĀʾishah stayed as the guest of Ṣafiyyah bint al-Ḥārith al-ʿAbdarī in the house of ʿAbdullāh ibn Khalaf in Basrah. Here Ṣafiyyah and other women of Basrah crowded round her to learn the *Sunnah* from her, and to put many questions of law, which she answered, and which are all well documented in the compilations of ḥadīth. Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, narrated from Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn that ʿĀʾishah came down as a guest to Ṣafiyyah Umm Ṭalaḥah al-Ṭalaḥāt. On seeing Ṣafiyyah's daughters ʿĀʾishah said: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – entered and in my room there was a girl. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – gave me a piece of material he had and asked me to make it into two pieces, and give one piece to this girl and give the other piece to the girl who is in the house of Umm Salamah, because they seem to be

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, (*sub anno* 571–580) 146. [2] Their names can be found in MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī*, 462. [3] TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 381.

adults.'[1] ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUbayd, the *muʾadhdhin* of the mosque of Jurdān, narrated from ʿUdaysah bint Uhbān that he said: 'When ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib came here to Basrah, he called on my father, and said: O Abū Muslim, are you not going to help me against these people? My father said: Yes I am. Then he called his slave-girl and said: O girl, bring [me] my sword. She brought it. Then he drew out a hand-span of it – there it was, a wooden sword. Then he said: My friend and your cousin [i.e. the Prophet] took from me this covenant that when there is *fitnah* among Muslims, then make a sword from wood. Now if you want I can come with you. [ʿAlī] said: No. I do not need you and your sword.'[2] Similarly, when Abū Hurayrah came to Damascus and stayed as a guest in the house of Abū l-Dardāʾ, the women used the chance to learn from him. Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUbaydillāh has narrated from Karīmah bint al-Ḥasḥās al-Muzaniyyah that she said: 'Abū Hurayrah narrated to us when we were in the house of Umm al-Dardāʾ that he heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – narrating from his Lord that He said: I am with My slave as long as he remembers Me and his lips move with remembrance of Me.'[3]

The most important and highest chain to *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* is one that goes through the great *muḥaddith* Abū ʿAbdillah al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī. His place of residence was Baghdad. When once he visited Damascus the people crowded to him to read the *Ṣaḥīḥ* with him. The class was arranged in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī, beginning at the end of Shawwāl 630 and concluding on 10 Dhū l-Qaʿdah of the same year. The whole *Ṣaḥīḥ* was read to al-Zabīdī in 22 sessions, and the class was attended by the most eminent scholars and jurists. The last surviving person to narrate from al-Zabīdī after attending these sessions was Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār, by

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[1]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *al-marʾah tuṣallī bi-ghayr khimār.* [2]IBN MĀJAH, Sunan, *Fitan*, bāb *al-Tathbīt fī l-fitnah.* [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tawḥīd*, bāb *qawl Allāh – lā tuḥarrik bi-hī lisānak*; IBN ḤAJAR, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, xiii. 611; AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 292–93.

whom the chain of narration to the *Ṣaḥīḥ* was much shortened for those after him because he lived such a long life. Women also benefited from this precious opportunity and attended the same sessions on the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, and in great numbers. Among them were Khadījah bint Muḥammad ibn Saʿd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisiyyah (d. 701),[1] and the long-lived Shaykhah Zaynab bint Sulaymān ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Raḥmān al-Isʿardī (d. 705). Ibn Ḥajar confirms this in his account of her: 'She heard the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī.'[2] Shaykhah Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd al-Baṭāʾi-hiyyah also attended and al-Dhahabī confirms it: 'She heard the *Ṣaḥīḥ* from al-Zabīdī.'[3]

The long-lived shaykhah Umm al-Ḥasan Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAmr al-Farrāʾ only attended two sessions and narrated them.[4] Al-Dhahabī says of Hadiyyah bint ʿAlī Ibn ʿAsākir al-Baghdâdī: 'She attended the class of al-Zabīdī.'[5] Another shaykhah, one well known for her higher *isnād*, Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ bint ʿUmar ibn Asʿad ibn al-Munajjā al-Tanūkhiyyah also attended. Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāṣī says of her: 'She studied with Ḥusayn ibn al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī and also *Musnad al-Shāfiʿī*.'[6] Ibn Ḥajar says in his account of ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisiyyah: 'She was the last person who narrated *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with high *isnād* by her hearing [it]; and it is a wonderful coincidence that Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ was the last woman in the world among all those who narrated from al-Zabīdī and she died in 716, while this ʿĀʾishah is similar to her in dying in 816 and she had above [Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ] this quality that even from among the men who heard from al-Ḥajjār, the colleague of Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ, none remained in the world other than herself. Between the death of ʿĀʾishah and Sitt

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[1]Muḥammad IBN JĀBIR (d. 749), *Barnamāj al-Wādī Āshī*, 169; AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, i. 232. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, ii. 119. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ *Dhayl al-ʿibār*, 60. [4]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, iii. 351. [5]AL-DHAHABĪ *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, ii. 362. [6]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 397. [7] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 351.

al-Wuzarāʾ the difference is exactly one hundred years.'[7] In the thirteenth century Umm al-Faḍl Nafīsah bint ʿAbū l-ʿIzz Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Shanwānī studied with Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad al-Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī *Thulāthiyyāt* of al-Bukhārī – i.e. those ḥadīths with only three narrators before al-Bukhārī – and *Arbaʿūn* of al-Nawawī in 1189 in the house of her father.[1]

TEACHERS IN OTHER TOWNS

Women also got ḥadīths from teachers of other towns, either by travelling to them, or by correspondence, or by request of *ijāzah*s. Among those who travelled in the path of knowledge, the Kufan *muḥaddithah* Jasrah bint Dajājah al-ʿĀmiriyyah, got ḥadīth in Madinah from ʿAli ibn Abī Ṭālib, ʿĀʾishah and Umm Salamah, and from Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī.[2] Muḥammad ibn al-Sāʾib ibn Barakah narrated from his mother that she said: 'I did *ṭawāf* of the House in a group of women from Banū al-Mughīrah in the company of ʿĀʾishah. The women mentioned Ḥassān ibn Thābit and attacked him [for his part in the slander about ʿĀʾishah]. ʿĀʾishah reminded [them of] Ḥassān's poetic verses in praise of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* – and said: I hope that God will enter him into paradise because of [it].'[3]

In later centuries Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Qazwīnī studied ḥadīth with Abū l-Ḥusayn Aḥmad ibn ʿAli al-Jawharī al-Mawṣilī in Tripoli, and with Abū Muḥammad Ṭāhir ibn Naṣr al-Asfījābī and the qāḍī Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā al-Saʿdī in Egypt. She settled in Ṣur.[4] Jumūʿah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydullāh al-Maḥmiyyah of Nishapur (d. *ca.* 396), having studied with the teachers of her town, did ḥajj and heard from various teachers on the way.[5] Al-Sulamī says: 'I heard her say: In Baghdad I called upon Shaykh Abū l-Ḥusayn

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[1]See *samāʿāt at the end of Juzʾ fī-hi Thulāthiyyāt* AL-BUKHĀRĪ. [2]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 143. [3]See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 515. [4]AL-SUYŪṬĪ (d. 911), *al-Minjam fī l-muʿjam*, 95–97, 85. [5]AL-ṢAYRAFĪNĪ, *al-Muntakhab min kitāb al-Siyāq li-l-Taʾrīkh Naysābūr*, 183.

al-Khuḍrī, and he asked me: Who did you 'accompany' [i.e. study with for a long time]? I said: I 'accompanied' al-Naṣrābādī. Then he asked me: What do you remember of his sayings? I said: I heard him say: Whoever's connection (*nisbah*) is correct, his knowledge is perfect. On that al-Khuḍrī [being impressed by what he heard] remained silent. When I came back al-Naṣrābādī was pleased and said: That is how it should be for anyone who calls upon a shaykh.'[1] This woman scholar travelled continually to learn from different teachers in different places.

Where the women could not travel to the scholars they would resort to correspondence with them. For example Fāṭimah, also called Sutaytah, daughter of the qāḍī Kamāl al-Dīn Maḥmūd ibn Shīrīn al-Ḥanafī, used to write letters to scholars. When Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī's brother died, she wrote to him to console him.[2]

The women got *ijāzah*s from the scholars of other towns. For example ʿĀʾishah bint ʿUmar ibn Rushayd al-Fihri of Sabta in Morocco received *ijāzah*s from a lot of scholars in Egypt, Makkah, Madinah and Syria. Another example is Āsiyah bint Jārullāh ibn Ṣāliḥ al-Shaybānī (d. 873): the large number of scholars who gave her *ijāzah*s are listed by al-Suyūṭī (d. 911): there are 105 names in his list, from different towns and places.[3]

NUMBER OF TEACHERS

Among the narrators of ḥadīth there are those who had no more than one or two teachers. About such narrators a genre of writing developed among the people of ḥadīth called 'al-wuḥdān wa-l-mathānī'. At the end of the most famous of these compilations, *al-Āḥād wa-l-mathānī* of Abū Bakr ibn Abī ʿĀṣim (d. 287), are mentioned those women who have narrated only one or two ḥadīths.

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[1] AL-SULAMĪ (d. 412), *Dhikr al-niswah al-mutaʿabbidāt*, 423. The term of genealogy (*nisbah*) is here used metaphorically to indicate the spiritual connection between master and disciple. [2] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 111. [3] AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Minjam fī l-muʿjam*, 95–97, 85.

However, many women received ḥadīths from a great many narrators, most famously ʿĀʾishah who, as well as narrating directly from the Prophet himself, also narrated from Ḥamzah ibn ʿAmr al-Aslamī, Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, her father Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, Judāmah bint Wahb al-Asadiyyah, and Fāṭimah, the daughter of the Prophet.[1] The Successor, Umm al-Dardāʾ narrated from her husband Abū l-Dardāʾ, Salmān al-Fārisī, Kaʿb ibn ʿĀṣim al-Ashʿarī, ʿĀʾishah, Abū Hurayrah, Faḍālah ibn ʿUbayd al-Anṣārī. In later centuries, the renowned *muḥaddithah* Shuhdah received ḥadīth from Ṭirād ibn Muḥammad al-Zaynabī, Ibn Ṭalḥah al-Niʿālī, Abū l-Ḥasan ibn Ayyūb, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb ibn al-Baṭir, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Yūsuf, Ḥasan ibn Salmān al-Daqqāq, Thābit Bundār, Abū Yāsir Aḥmad, ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn ʿUlawan al-Shaybānī, Jaʿfar al-Sarrāj Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Harīsah, Manṣūr ibn Ḥayd al-Naysabūrī, Abū l-Barakāt Ḥamd ibn ʿAbdillah al-Wakīl, Abū Ghālib al-Baqillānī and many others.[2]

As for women who received *ijāzah*s, the lists of the teachers of some of them are, as I mentioned just above, very long indeed. For example Āsiyah bint Muḥammad al-ʿIrbīlī received *ijāzah*s of over two hundred teachers, both male and female. Among those teachers are: the Shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bint Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Shukr al-Maqdisī, ʿAbd al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn al-Shaykh Badrān al-Maqdisī, Muḥammad ibn Ḥibatullāh al-Shīrāzī, ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Munʿim ibn ʿUmar al-Qawwās, ʿAli ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Fahim, Umm Muḥammad Sitt al-ʿArab bint al-Shaykh Tāj al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUmar al-Sulamī, Umm Ibrāhīm Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm al-Baʿlabakkiyyah, the long-lived imam Kamāl al-Dīn Humām ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanafī, Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bint al-Kamāl, and Amat al-ʿAzīz Khadījah bint Yūsuf ibn Ghunaymah.[3]

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[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xiii. 227. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 571–580), 146. [3] *Majmūʿat al-Ijāzāt al-makhṭūṭāh fī l-Madrasah al-Ḍiyāʾiyyah bi-safḥ Qāsyūn.*

Chapter 5

The reading matter

What women studied varied from one place to another, even between schools in the same city, and it varied between periods. It is therefore difficult to present a satisfactory overview of it. Nevertheless, it may still be useful to attempt a general sketch, and mention those elements of a formal curriculum in the later centuries that were stable across many parts of the Islamic world. After that, in the concluding section of this chapter, I survey the kinds of ḥadīth books that became and remained popular.

THE FIRST THREE CENTURIES

Women's education in pre-Islamic Arabia was, aside from the traditional household skills, mostly oral, confined to poetry, fine speech and horsemanship, with writing skills among them very rare. As Islam became established, the scope of their education and culture widened rapidly. They learnt the Qurʾān by heart, with some also studying variants among the known recitations; they acquired the ḥadīth of the Prophet and understanding of the religion through the *Sunnah*. Some were so proficient, and so devoted to the *dīn*, that they became jurists and muftis. They were also trained in writing and speaking, and the different modes of eloquence.

In the first three centuries, there was no established, formal programme of Islamic education for either men or women. However, we can derive from the general culture of that time that what students began with was language, with the aim of skill in different styles of expression. Arabic grammar, in the strict sense of the term, developed from the second century on. However, an awareness of the need to know grammar in order

to avoid errors in understanding the commands of God and the teaching of His Messenger is traditionally dated to the caliphate of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. According to the renowned man of letters al-Mubarrid (d. 285), awareness of the need to think about grammar may have arisen because of a woman. He said: 'Al-Māzinī narrated to us that the cause of the foundation of grammar was that the daughter of Abū l-Aswad [d. 69] once said to her father *mā ashadda al-ḥarri?* [What is the most violent of heat? instead of *mā ashadda al-ḥarra!* How violent the heat is! So] he said: Pebbles in the hot earth. She said: I meant to express my shock at the heat. Then he said: Have people begun to make mistakes [like that]? Then he told ʿAlī about that; [and then ʿAlī] dictated to him some basic rules that were later expanded by Abū l-Aswad.'[1]

After or alongside acquiring language skills, the girls would turn their attention to the Qurʾān, learning how to recite and memorize it, and understand its meaning. Only then would they start learning ḥadīths by memorizing and then narrating them. Those with more aptitude would go on to learn how to think about the 'scholarly apparatus' of the ḥadīths – their occasions and their narrators – how to distinguish among narrators and chains of narrators, and learn the *sunnah*s that derive from the ḥadīth and how to implement them.

THE FOURTH TO THE SIXTH CENTURIES

Systemization of the curriculum, beginning in the fourth, developed in the fifth century under the guiding hand of the great vizier Niẓām al-Mulk Qiwām al-Dīn Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Isḥāq al-Ṭūsī (408–84). A shrewd and far-sighted administrator, and himself interested in knowledge, he established scholarships and grants for students and founded large colleges in Baghdad, Nishapur and Tus. He also founded many madrasas, notably in Marw, Herat, Balkh, and Basrah. Philosophy, theology *(kalām)*, logic, and practical sciences like mathe-

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, iv. 83.

matics, medicine and engineering were part of the curriculum of the 'Niẓāmī' colleges and schools, and these subjects spread to other schools albeit taught at an elementary level.

From my study of biographies of the women scholars of this period I can affirm that girls usually began their studies with Arabic language and developed reading, speaking and writing skills. At the same time they would learn the Qurʾān, reciting and memorizing it. Some learnt the whole of it by heart at a remarkably early age. One example of that is Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar al-Tāwūsiyyah al-Ḥusayniyyah (5th c.), who had memorized the Qurʾān before she was nine years old. Later, she learnt ḥadīth with her father (d. 464).[1]

Grammar must have been part of the syllabus since the second–third century, though the earliest reference that I have found to a woman's expertise in it is from the fourth. It comes in the account of Maryam bint Jahsh, wife of the great Yemeni scholar Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Abī l-Fawāris al-Hamdānī (4th c.). It is an illustration of her knowledge and her acuteness of mind that she was able subtly to resolve a difficult point for her husband. He had been engaged in debate with some adherents of the Murjiʾī heresy. These are people who held that faith in the heart – even if undisclosed, regardless of what one utters with one's tongue, regardless of any deeds that one does with one's limbs – suffices to secure salvation. ʿAlī alluded to the verse in sūrat *al-Aʿrāf* (6. 40), quoting the end of it: 'Indeed those who belie Our signs *(āyāt)* and disdain them – for them the gates of the heavens will not be opened, nor will they enter the Garden, until *the camel passes through the eye of the needle.*' The Murjiʾī who was debating said: 'This is easy for God, with His power, if He wills, *He passes the camel through the eye of the needle.*' When ʿAlī returned home his mind was still preoccupied, and he was sleepless because of the Murjiʾī's retort. Maryam asked him what the matter was. After he had explained it, she said: 'In the verse of the Qurʾān *the camel* is the subject [of the verb], not

[1]See ʿUmar Riḍā KAḤḤĀLAH (d. 1407), *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, iv. 86.

object.' Her husband now understood what he could have said in answer to the Murjiʿī, was content and slept. Early next morning he went to his companions and told them what should render the Murjiʿīs speechless.[1]

The biographers' account of Amat al-Wāḥid bint al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Ḍabbī al-Maḥāmilī (d. 377) sheds light on the syllabus from the beginning of the fourth century. Al-Dāraquṭnī says: 'She memorized the Qurʾān, and learnt *fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of Imām al-Shāfiʿī, inheritance law and its mathematical calculation, *dawr*, grammar and other sciences.'[2] Also, al-Dhahabī says: 'She narrated from her father, from Ismāʿīl al-Warrāq, ʿAbd al-Ghāfir ibn Salamah, and memorized the Qurʾān and studied the *fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of Imām al-Shāfiʿī, inheritance law, *dawr*, and Arabic language and grammar, and other Islamic sciences.'[3]

In this period, study of *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* became widespread among men and women. The most famous woman of the fourth century to hear the whole *Saḥīḥ* directly from her teacher – Abū l-Haytham al-Kushmīhanī (d. 389) – was the great scholar, Shaykhah Umm al-Kirām Karīmah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥātim al-Marwazziyah (d. 463).[4] Also in this period the *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* was introduced into Spain. Khadījah bint Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Saʿīd al-Shantiyālī (in the fifth century) heard the whole of it from its famous narrator, Abū Dharr ʿAbd ibn Aḥmad al-Harawī.[5] Ibn Bishkwāl (d. 578) says: 'I have seen her *samāʿ* in the originals of her father in his handwriting; and she came with him to Spain.'[6]

Women also studied the *Saḥīḥ* of Muslim, even engrossing themselves in *mustakhraj* of it – the narration of its texts by a

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[1]See LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 177. [2]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Baghdād*, xiv, 443. al-Jurjānī (d. 816; *al-Taʿrīfāt*, 76) defines *dawr* as a kind of argumentation in which each proposition is dependent upon the next in a circular chain. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 351–80), 607. [4]AL-DHAHABĪ *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 223. [5]IBN BISHKWĀL (d. 578), *K. al-Ṣilah*, ii. 696. [6]*Ibid.*

different route with higher *isnād*. The renowned scholar Fāṭimah bint al-Ustādh Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Daqqāq (d. 480), wife of Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī,[1] heard the whole *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī ʿAwānah* (*mustakhraj* of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*) and then later transmitted it. Ibn Ḥajar, in the account of his teacher Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Takrītī says, after mentioning his *isnād* for *Ṣaḥīḥ Abī ʿAwānah* to ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī Saʿd ibn al-Samʿānī: 'He heard it from Abū l-Barākāt al-Furāwī, who heard it from Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī al-Daqqāq, who heard it from Abū Nuʿaym ʿAbd al-Mālik ibn al-Ḥasan al-Isfrāyīnī, who heard it from Abū ʿAwānah.'[2]

Some women took an interest in ḥadīth books written on specific topics. For example, Fāṭimah bint Aḥmad ibn al-Faḍl al-ʿAnazī studied *Kitāb al-Ṣalāh* of Abū Nuʿaym al-Faḍl ibn Dukayn with Shaykh Abū Bakr al-Aʿraj Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Shādhān in 431.[3] Others specialized in sub-disciplines of the sciences of the Qurʾān and *Sunnah*. For example, Umm Saʿd Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad al-Bahrāniyyah (5th c.) specialized in the science of *nāsikh* (abrogating) and *mansūkh* (abrogated). Ibn Ḥajar narrated *K. al-Nāsikh wa-l-mansūkh* of ʿAṭāʾ al-Khūrasānī (d. 135) from Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr from Sulaymān ibn Ḥamzah, from Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī from Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī from Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad al-Bahrāniyyah, with her *isnād* to the author.[4]

Taṣawwuf became very popular in this period in many parts of the Islamic world and books on different aspects of the ascetic life were widely studied. Shaykhah Umm al-Dalāl Amat al-Raḥmān bint Abī l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Junayd (d. 487) studied *K. al-Tafarrud wa-l-ʿuzlah* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn al-Ājurrī with Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad ibn Bishrān.[5] One consequence of the

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[1]See IBN NUQṬAH, *al-Taqyīd*, 497; AL-DHAHABĪ *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 479. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-Muʾassas*, ii. 481. [3]See the *samāʿāt* in ABŪ NUʿAYM al-Faḍl IBN DUKAYN, *K. al-Ṣalāh*, 51. [4]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras*, 113. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 573–74.

emphasis on asceticism was deepened regard for preaching and the writings of those famous for affecting sermons. The long-lived Khadījah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Wāʿiẓah al-Shāhjahāniyyah (376–460) studied *Amālī* of Abū l-Ḥusayn ibn Samʿūn al-Wāʿiẓ with its author.[1] ʿĀʾishah bint Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm al-Wāʿiẓah (d. 460) wrote down the *Amālī* of Ibn Mandah, receiving the work directly from him.[2]

Also in this period, interest in the 'Forty ḥadīths' genre blossomed. It is recorded in the account of Umm al-ʿAlāʾ, the grand-daughter of Shaykh Abū l-Ṭayyib ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Shammah that she attended the reading of the *Forty Ḥadīths* of Abū Bakr ibn al-Muqrī (d. 381) with her grandfather in 455.[3]

As for poetry and literature, there is the example of Ishrāq al-Suwaydāʾ (*ca.* 450), the slave of Abū l-Muṭarrif ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ghalbūn al-Qurṭubī, from Valencia in Spain. She studied Arabic grammar, language and literature and became so expert in *ʿarūḍ* (prosody) that she was called al-ʿArūḍiyyah. She also learnt by heart and lectured on two important works on literature: *al-Kāmil* of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrid and *Amālī* of Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī.[4] Another woman, the daughter of Sharīf al-Raḍī learnt the *Nahj al-balāghah* from her uncle. Ibn al-Ikhwah al-Baghdādī (d. 548) narrated the book from her.[5]

FROM THE SEVENTH TO THE NINTH CENTURIES

The education of women did not change much in this period, though it became more organized. The early emphasis on the language and grammar remained, with students memorizing concise works on the subject: for example, Nuḍār bint al-Shaykh Abī Ḥayyān (d. 730) learnt by heart an elementary text on grammar.[6]

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[1]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 447. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 302. [3]See the *samāʿāt* at the end of Ibn al-Muqrī, *al-Arbaʿūn* in TAKALAH, Muḥammad Ziyād ibn ʿUmar, *Jamharat al-ajzāʾ al-ḥadīthiyyah*, 133. [4]See al-Awsī AL-MARĀKASHĪ, *al-Dhayl wa-l-takmilah li-K. al-mawṣūl wa-l-ṣilah*, 480. [5]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, ii. 295. [6]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, iv. 395.

Commitment to memorizing the Qurʾān and understanding it also continued. Some learnt it at an early age – like Sharaf al-Ashrāf bint ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Ṭāwūsiyyah al-Ḥasaniyyah, who memorized the whole Qurʾān, when she was twelve;[1] others did so much later in life – like Umm al-Ḥasan Karīmah bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Abīwardī (d. 555), who memorized parts of the Qurʾān and recited them regularly, as well as studying the ḥadīth sciences.[2] Some women made a particular study of the seven recitations, like Umm al-ʿIzz bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ghālib al-ʿAbdarī al-Dānī (d. 617).[3] Some of them learnt books of *tajwīd*. In 786 Ḥusn bint Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Saʿdiyyah al-Makkiyyah (d. 842) learnt part of *al-Shāṭibiyyah* and another work on the subject.[4]

There are other women who specialized in some sciences of the Qurʾān. ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Zujāj studied with her teachers *Gharāʾib al-Qurʾān* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAzīz al-Sijistānī (d. 330),[5] and *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* of Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb al-Bajalī (3rd c.).[6] The long-lived shaykhah, famed for her higher *isnād*, Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 647) learnt *Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān* of al-Bajalī from Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Shīrāzī with an *isnād* to its author.[7] She studied *K. Akhlāq ḥamalat al-Qurʾān* of Abū Bakr al-Ājurrī (d. 360) with Abū l-Fatḥ Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī by his *isnād* to its author;[8] and *Mushkil al-Qurʾān al-ʿaẓīm* of Muḥyi l-Sunnah al-Baghawī with Ḥāfiẓ Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī, who got it from the author.[9]

Summaries of *fiqh* were popular in the syllabus: among the Ḥanafīs, *Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī*; among Mālikīs, *al-Risālah al-Qayrawāniyyah*; among Shāfiʿīs *Mukhtaṣar al-Muzanī*. Al-Dhahabī has

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[1]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, ii. 292. [2]AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Muntakhab min Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, iii. 1918. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ says: 'She was well versed in the seven readings.' *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 611–20), 328. [4]IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, 310; *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 1411. [5]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, iii. 158. [6]*Ibid.* [7]Sirāj al-Dīn AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Mushaykhah*, MS, 48. [8]*Ibid.*, 83. [9]*Ibid.*, 95.

recorded that *Mukhtaṣar al-Muzanī* was among those useful books given as dowry to the bride at the wedding.[1] Some specialized in works of *fiqh* written by and for experts. Fāṭimah al-Samarqandiyyah (6th c.) memorized all of *Tuḥfat al-fuqahā'*.[2] Others studied specific topics in *fiqh* – for example Shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Khadījah bint Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad al-Ḥarrāniyyah (d. 634) studied *K. al-Amwāl* of al-Azdī with her father.

As for the 'Six Books', the principal compilations of ḥadīth, the examples of women's interest in them will be given under a separate heading. Some were interested in other sound works of ḥadīth also, those less popularly known. Khadījah bint Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dā'im studied *Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Ḥibbān* with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Hayjā' ibn al-Zarrād al-Ḥarīrī.[3] Umm al-Ḥayā Ḥafṣah bint Abī ʿAbdillāh Aḥmad ibn Mulāʿib al-Baghdādiyyah al-ʿAzajiyyah (d. 612) learnt *Ṣaḥīfah* of Hammām ibn Munnabih (d. 131) from Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Urmawī with his *sanad* to the Companion Abū Hurayrah.[4] The long-lived shaykhah of high *isnād* Tajannī bint ʿAbdillah al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575) learnt *Ḥadīth al-Mukharranī wa-l-Marwazī*[5] and *Amālī al-Maḥāmilī* with Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭalḥah al-Niʿālī,[6] and *Juz' Hilāl* with Ṭirād ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Zaynabī, who got it from its author.[7] Umm al-Khayr Ḥalīmah bint al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn ʿAsākir studied *Juz' ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī* with her father in 541.[8]

Ḥadīths narrated principally through women were a special interest. Sitt al-ʿArab bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Bukhārī (d. 767) studied *Faḍā'il Fāṭimah* of Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Shāhīn with her grandfather.[9] Sitt al-Shām bint Khalīl ibn Naṣr studied 41 ḥadīths from *Musnad al-nisā' al-ṣaḥābiyyāt* with Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī in 808.[10] ʿĀ'ishah bint Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalā'*, xiv. 233. [2]ʿAbd al-Qādir AL-QURASHĪ, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍī'iyyah fī Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*. [3]ḌIYĀ' AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 364. [4]AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Mushaykhah*, MS, 75–76. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-mu'assas*, ii. 19–20. [6]*Ibid.*, ii. 234. [7]*Ibid.*, ii. 346. [8]See *samāʿāt* at end of *Juz' ʿAlī ibn Muḥamad AL-ḤIMYARĪ*. [9]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-mu'assas*, ii. 225. [10]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisā'*, ii. 155.

studied with her father his book *al-Iṣābah fi-mā istadrakat ʿĀʾishah ʿalā l-ṣaḥābah* in 794.[1]

From the sixth century onwards, women are found learning books written on the principles of ḥadīth and narrators of ḥadīth. Shaykhah ʿAzīzah bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ṭarrāḥ (d. 600) received the whole of *al-Kifāyah fī qawānīn al-riwāyah* of Abū Bakr al-Khaṭīb (d. 463) from her grandfather, who narrated it directly from the author.[2] Khadījah bint ʿUmar ibn Abī Bakr studied *K. al-Taʾrīkh* of Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn with Abū l-Faḍl Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad al-ʿIrāqī in 652.[3] Fāṭimah bint al-Mubārak studied al-*Taʾrīkh al-kabīr* of Imām al-Bukhārī in 503 with Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Ghanāʾim al-Narsī.[4] The long-lived Shaykhah Zaynab bint Makkī al-Ḥarrāniyyah (d. 688) studied *K. al-Nasab* of Zubayr ibn Bakkār with ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad.[5] Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah (d. 647) studied Ibn Mandah's (d. 395) *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah* with Masʿūd al-Thaqafī.[6] Sitt al-Taraf bint al-Imām Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Tinnīsī studied part of *Taʾrīkh Jurjān* of al-Sahmī (d. 427) with her father in 597.[7] In 529, Rabīʿah bint Saʿd al-Khayr read *K. al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa-l-matrūkīn* with Imām Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Khayrūn;[8] and *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiʿ* with Abū l-Qāsim al-Mubārak ibn al-Buzūrī.[9] The great scholar and expert in Qurʾānic reading, Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Muẓaffar al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 532) studied *K. Gharīb al-ḥadīth* of Abū Sulaymān al-Khaṭṭābī with Abū l-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ghāfir al-Fārisī.[10] Umm al-Ḥusn Kamāl bint al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Samarqandī (d. 558) studied *Taqyīd al-*

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[1]See the *samāʿ* on the last page of *al-Iṣābah fī mā istadrakat ʿĀʾishah ʿalā l-Ṣaḥābah*. [2]DIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Thabat al-masmūʿāt*, 205–06. [3]See *samāʿāt* in Yaḥyā IBN MAʿĪN, *K. al-Taʾrīkh*, iv. 509–10. [4]See *samāʿ* at the end of vol. 1 of AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-kabīr*. [5]DIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 372. [6]*Ibid.*, 383. [7]Abū l-Qāsim AL-SAHMĪ (d. 427), *Taʾrīkh Jurjān*, 368. [8]See *samāʿ* at the end of AL-DĀRAQUṬNĪ (d. 385), *al-Ḍuʿafāʾ wa-l-matrukūn*. [9]See *samāʿāt* in the first part of AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiʿ*, p. 59, and what follows. [10]AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Taḥbīr*, ii. 256.

ʿilm of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī with her father.[1] Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr ibn Mūsā ibn al-Khallāl studied *Suʾālāt al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Silafī* with Shaykh Imām Abū l-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥibatullāh al-Hamadhānī in 635.[2] Umm al-Faḍl Zaynab bint Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qaysī (d. 610) studied *K. al-Asmāʾ al-mubhamah fi l-anbāʾ al-muḥkamah* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī with Imām Abū l-Fatḥ Naṣrullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Miṣṣīṣī.[3] Umm al-Ḥasan Asmāʾ bint al-Jamāl al-Mahrānī (d. 867) studied *Riwāyāt al-abnaʾ ʿan al-abnāʾ* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī with al-Kamāl Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣrullāh and Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ghālib.[4]

Another focus of study was biography of the Prophet and the story of his battles. Shaykhah Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah studied *al-Shamāʾil* of al-Tirmidhī with al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid and Rajāʾ ibn Ḥāmid ibn Rajāʾ al-Maʿdīnī.[5] Umm al-Hanāʾ Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr al-ʿUthmānī al-Murāghi studied *al-Shifāʾ* and *al-Burdah* with al-ʿIzz ibn Jamāʿah in 767.[6] Umm Aḥmad Khadījah bint Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Rājiḥ al-Maqdisī studied the whole *Maghāzī* of al-Wāqidī in 603.[7] Interest in the battles of the Prophet led to interest in the history of later conquests. The famous eighth century scholar Zahrah bint al-Muḥaddith Kamāl al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn Ḥusayn ibn Abī Bakr al-Khutanī al-Ḥanafī studied *K. Futūḥ Miṣr wa-l-Maghrib* of Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam al-Miṣrī (d. 257) with Kamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Shujāʿ al-Miṣrī.[8]

Interest in theology also continued: Zaynab bint ʿUmar al-Kindī (d. 699) learnt *K. al-Tawḥīd* of Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq ibn Khuzaymah (d. 311) with Abū Rawḥ ʿAbd al-Muʿizz

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taqyīd al-ʿilm*, *Muqaddimah*, 25. [2] See *samāʿāt* at the end of *Suʾālāt al-Ḥāfiẓ AL-SILAFĪ*, 127. [3] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *K. al-Asmāʾ al-mubhamah fi l-anbāʾ al-muḥkamah*, *Muqaddimah*. [4] IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, 397. [5] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 14–18. [6] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 6. [7] See *samāʿ* in MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*, 109. [8] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 14–42; *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 179.

ibn Muḥammad al-Harāwī, with his *sanad* going back to Ibn Khuzaymah.[1] Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah received *K. al-Tawḥīd* of Ibn Mandah (d. 395) from Ḥasan ibn ʿAbbās al-Rustamī, Masʿūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Thaqafī and Abū l-Khayr ibn al-Baghbān, all three from ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Mandah from his father, its author.[2] She also studied *Dalāʾil al-Nubuwwah* of al-Bayhaqī with al-Mubārak ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ṭabbākh,[3] and *K. al-Īmān* of Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUmar al-Zuhrī, with Masʿūd al-Thaqafī.[4]

FROM LATER NINTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

From the later ninth–tenth century on, there was a decline in ḥadīth scholarship across the Islamic world. The numbers of men and women engaged in it decreased and so did their reading material. Nevertheless, primary education remained more or less the same, with Arabic grammar as the starting point. Some students memorized concise works on grammar. Umm al-Ḥayāʾ Umāmah bint Qāḍī al-Quḍāt Athīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Shaḥnah al-Ḥanafī (d. 939) knew by heart some of *Mulḥat al-iʿrāb* and other books.[5]

Besides grammar, interest in the Qurʾān remained strong. Būran bint Muḥammad Athīr al-Dīn (d. 938) read the Qurʾān, studied books and copied them.[6] The emperor Awrangzeb ʿAlamgīr (d. 1113) paid Maryam al-Kashmīriyyah 30,000 gold dinars after his daughter Zayb al-Nisāʾ memorized the Qurʾān with her. Zayb al-Nisāʾ also learnt writing and different styles of calligraphy, and she studied ḥadīth and *fiqh* according to the syllabus of that time.[7] The syllabus for women was then the same as the men's, and included Arabic grammar, mathematics, logic, philosophy and other sciences. That was not the case in India only: an example from Yemen in the same period is Zaynab

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 52. [2]Id., *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 517. [3]*Ibid.*, ii. 38, 39. [4]*Ibid.*, 43. [5]IBN AL-ḤANBALĪ (d. 971), *Durr al-ḥibab fī taʾrīkh aʿyān Ḥalab*, i. 338. [6]*Ibid.*, 403. [7]ʿAbd al-Ḥayy AL-ḤASANĪ (d. 1341), *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, vi. 99–100.

bint Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Muʾayyadī (d. 1114), who studied grammar, logic, theology, *fiqh*, astrology, astronomy, literature and other sciences.[1] Jahān Āra Begum bint al-Sulṭān Shāhjahān (d. 1092) studied the art of Qurʾānic recitation and *tajwīd* with Sitt Khānum, learnt calligraphy, Persian and became expert in composition, poetry, household management and other skills.[2]

Some women turned, after *tajwīd*, to ḥadīth. Khunāthah bint Bakkār ibn ʿAlī al-Maʿāfirī (d. 1159) was an expert in all seven recitations and a scholar of ḥadīth.[3] Ḥadīth education began with the *Forty Ḥadīths* of al-Nawawī. Zayn al-ʿArab bint Muḥammad Kamāl al-Dīn (10th c.) knew by heart *al-Jazariyyah* in *tajwīd*, and al-Nawawī's *Forty Ḥadīths*.[4] Fāṭimah bint ʿAbdillāh al-Manshāwiyyah studied *Forty Ḥadīths* of al-Nawawī and *Thulathiyyāt al-Bukhārī* with Ḥāfiẓ Murtaḍāʾ al-Zabīdī in 1189.[5]

Some women did go further in ḥadīth study. Amat al-Khāliq bint Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Qāhirī (d. 902) studied in 816 with Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥanbalī some parts of *Fawāʾid* of Tammām al-Rāzī (d. 414), large parts of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām, *Musnad Aḥmad* [ibn Ḥanbal], *al-Ghaylāniyyāt* and other books of ḥadīth. She received *ijāzah*s from many scholars.[6] She also studied *Mashyakhah* of Ibn al-Bukhārī and *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghir* of al-Ṭabarānī.[7] In 857 Aymalik bint Aḥmad studied with Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Hilāl al-Azdī *K. al-Tawwābīn* of Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah (d. 620).[8] Bāy Khātūn bint Ibrāhīm al-Ḥalabiyyah (d. 942) studied *Minhāj* of al-Nawawī and part of *ʿIḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* with Zayn al-Dīn al-Shammāʿ.[9] Bulbul bint ʿAbdillāh al-Rūmiyyah studied with her master, Shaykh Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī the *Forty Ḥadīths* of Abū Bakr ibn al-Muqrī in

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[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 91. [2]AL-ḤASANĪ, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, v. 135. [3]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, i. 375. [4]Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad AL-ḤALABĪ (d. 1003), *Mutʿat al-adhhān*, ii. 871. [5]See *samāʿāt* at the end of *Thulāthiyyāt AL-BUKHĀRĪ*. [6]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 12. [7]AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Minjam fī l-muʿjam*, 98. [8]IBN QUDĀMAH, *K. al-Tawwabīn*, *Muqad-dimah*. [9]Muḥammad Rāghib AL-ṬABBĀKH (d. 1370), *Iʿlām al-nubalāʾ* v. 507.

880,[1] and in 897 *Ḥadīth al-Baghawī wa Ibn Ṣāʿid wa-l-Hāshimī* and *Faḍāʾil Bayt al-Maqdis* of Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 642).[2] Ḥabībah bint Shaykh al-Islām ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq al-Sanbāṭī (10th c.) studied with her father *Amālī al-Maḥāmilī* and *Ḥadīth Saʿdān ibn Naṣr*.[3] Khadījah bint Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muqrī al-Ḥanafī (d. 935) studied the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī with Shaykh Badr al-Dīn al-Ghazzī.[4] Sārah bint Numayr studied with Ḥāfiẓ ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī (d. 842) his book *al-Lafẓ al-mukarram bi-faḍl ʿĀshūrāʾ al-Muḥarram*.[5] Ṣābirīn al-Nūbiyyah (10th c.) studied the *Fawāʾid al-ʿIrāqiyyīn* of al-Naqqāsh with Umm Hānī al-Hūrīniyyah.[6] Zaynab bint Aktā (11th c.) studied *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ* of al-Ṭabarānī with Shaykh ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn Muḥammad al-Sanbāṭī.[7]

Besides general and specialized study of ḥadīth, women also studied *sīrah* and *kalām*. For example, in 906 ʿĀʾishah bint Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Kinānī read *Sīrah* of Ibn Hishām and *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwah* with Ḥāfiẓ Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī.[8]

IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The Qurʾān continued to be the foundation of the syllabus in this century as before. Khadījah bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAzzūz al-Fāsiyyah (d. 1323) knew the Qurʾān by heart and read it with different readings, with Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan Janbūr.[9] After that the women would study the common syllabus, comprising language and rational and traditional sciences. The long-lived *muḥaddithah* Amatullāh bint ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Dihlawiyyah (d. 1357) studied

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[1]See *samāʿāt* at the end of *al-Arbaʿūn* of Ibn al-Muqrī in TAKALAH, *Jamharah al-Ajzaʾ al-ḥadīthiyyah*, 130. [2]See *samāʿāt* at the end of *al-Ḥadīth al-Baghawī wa Ibn Ṣāʿid al-Hāshimī*, *ibid.*, 270. [3]See *Shiʿār al-ibrār fī l-adʿiyah wa-l-adhkār* in IBN MANDAH, *al-Fawāʾid*, 338. [4]Najm al-Dīn AL-GHAZZĪ, *al-Kawākib al-sāʾirah*, ii. 141. [5]See *samāʿ* in *al-Lafẓ al-mukarram bi-faḍl ʿĀshūrāʾ al-Muḥarram* in *Majmūʿ rasāʾil*, 130. [6]See *Juzʾ Fawāʾid al-ʿIrāqiyyīn*, 161 in *al-Fawāʾid* of IBN MANDAH. [7]See *samāʿāt* in *Muʿjam al-awsaṭ*, i. 106 [8]See the *samāʿ* in LEDER *et al.*, *al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*, 294–95. [9]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, i. 322.

the Qurʾān, grammar, Arabic literature, and Ḥanafī *fiqh* with her father, then devoted herself to ḥadīth, reading the Six Books with him many times, and other more specialized works including *ajzāʾ* and *musalsalāt*.[1] Amatullāh ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Ḥasaniyyah (d. 1396) memorized much of the Qurʾān, and received her primary education, from her uncle Sayyid ʿAzīz al-Raḥmān al-Nadwī and her mother, Khayr al-Nisāʾ. She went on to study a large number of books.

Khadījah bint Aḥmad ibn Jandān (d. 1344) studied with her grandmother elementary *fiqh* and what is necessary for women (e.g. rules about purification and prayer), and with her father *Mukhtaṣar al-Safīnah* and other works.[2]

Some of them specialized in ḥadīth and studied the Six Books and others. Shams al-Nisāʾ bint Āmir Ḥasan al-Sahsawānī (d. 1308) studied the Qurʾān with *tajwīd*, then learnt calligraphy, Arabic grammar, *tafsīr*, *Mishkat al-masābīh*, then the Six Books, with her father.[3] Ṣāliḥah bint ʿInāyat Rasūl al-ʿAbbāsī al-Chirayyākūtī (d. 1318) studied with her father all the books of the syllabus and accompanied him longer until she became expert in both rational and traditional sciences.[4] Fāṭimah bint Sālim (d. 1339) of Java learnt reading and writing from her father and studied *al-Minhaj al-mukhtaṣar* of Bā Faḍl and *al-Ajrūmiyyah* with him.[5] She studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with Zubayr ibn Qāsim Bā Raqabah,[6] and *Awāʾil al-Ajlūnī* with Sayyid Aḥmad ibn Zaynī Daḥlān.[7] The great scholar Liḥāẓ al-Nisāʾ bint Ṣābir Ḥusayn al-Sahsāwānī (d. 1309) learnt calligraphy from her father, then studied Arabic grammar. She studied *Bulūgh al-marām* and some books of *Ṣaḥīḥ* and *Sunnah* with Mawlānā Muḥammad Bashīr al-Sahsāwānī (14th c.), then other ḥadīth books with Shaykh Ḥusayn ibn Muḥsin al-Anṣārī (d. 1327).[8]

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[1]Muḥammad ʿĀshiq Īlāhī AL-BARNĪ, *al-ʿAnāqīd al-ghāliyah min al-asānīd al-ʿāliyah*, 175. [2]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 66. [3]AL-ḤASANĪ, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, viii. 185. [4]*Ibid.*, 195. [5]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 154. [6]*Ibid.* [7]*Ibid.*, 145–55. [8]AL-ḤASANĪ, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, viii. 382.

Some women also became interested in the study of books of *taṣawwuf.* Masᶜadah bint Aḥmad ibn Hādī ibn Aḥmad al-Haddār, for example, was well-known for her study of books like *Iḥyāᵓ ᶜUlūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazālī (d. 505), *Awārif al-maᶜārif* of al-Suhrawardī (d. 632), and for having memorized *Forty Ḥadīths* of al-Nabhānī (d. 1350).[1]

THE KINDS OF THE BOOKS THEY STUDIED

In this section, I try to describe briefly, with examples, the kinds of ḥadīth works the women studied, beginning with the Muwaṭṭā of Imām Mālik b. Anas. There is not enough space here to show with examples how intensive and extensive the reading material that some of the women studied was. The quantity is remarkable, even astonishing, and far exceeds what many ḥadīth scholars of our time would consider 'a lot'. To allow readers to get some sense of the scale, I have set out the list of the reading (with her teachers' names) of Umm Hānī bint Nūr al-Dīn al-Hūrīniyyah (d. 871): it will be found at the end of this chapter.

al-Muwaṭṭā

The *Muwaṭṭā* of Imām Mālik (d. 179) is the first major book combining ḥadīth and *fiqh.* It has been widely accepted by the community in all parts of the Islamic world; many have memorized it – among them, notably, Fāṭimah, the daughter of Imām Mālik, and Imām al-Shāfiᶜī. Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 574) studied the whole of it;[2] Ḍawᵓ al-Ṣabāḥ Ajībah al-Bāqdāriyyah studied it in the narration of al-Qaᶜnabī from Yaḥyā ibn Thābit (d. 566);[3] Khadījah (d. 873) bint Nūr al-Dīn ᶜAlī al-Anṣārī from Egypt studied it in the narration of Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā, with al-ᶜIzz ibn Abī l-Yumn al-Kuwayk.[4]

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[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-nisāᵓ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 180. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aᶜlām al-nubalāᵓ*, xxiii. 451. [3]ḌIYĀᵓ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 383. [4]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawᵓ al-lāmiᶜ*, xii. 29.

al-Jawāmiʿ

Jawāmiʿ (plural of *jāmiʿ*), refers to the comprehensive compilations of ḥadīth that contain all the needed divisions of ḥadīth: belief, *ʿibādah*, transactions, contracts, *zuhd*, manners, *tafsīr*, *siyar*, history, *fitan*, *manāqib* etc. The most famous such compilations are three of the Six Books: namely, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, *al-Jamiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim, and *al-Jāmiʿ* of al-Tirmidhī.

As I noted earlier, the women's interest in *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* began in the fourth century and has been sustained throughout the centuries. The number of women who studied it is huge. I have given some examples; here is another: the great shaykhah of Isfahan, Umm al-Bahāʾ Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Abī Saʿd al-Aṣbahānī (d. 539) studied it with Saʿīd al-ʿAyyār.[1] Some women studied only a part of the book: for example, Āminah bint al-Muʾayyad Abī Bakr ibn al-ʿAmīd (7th c.), who read it with Abū l-Waqt al-Sijzī.[2] Interest in *Saḥīḥ Muslim* was only a little less. The renowned Nishapuri scholar, Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 532) studied it with its most famous teacher of her time, Abū l-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ghāfir al-Fārisī.[3] Interest in the *Jāmiʿ* of al-Tirmidhī blossomed much later. The list of all its women students would be very long. One of them was Zaynab bint Makkī (d. 688), who read it with ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad.[4]

On the following pages, three linked charts show the transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to women up to 816. There were thousands who heard this very difficult book from its author. In later times people naturally went to the longest-lived of the most competent narrators in order to get the highest *isnād*. The most sought-after narrator from al-Bukhārī, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Maṭar al-Firabrī, lived around 65 years after the imām's death. Chart 1a goes through him; Charts 1b and 1c start with him.

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-ʿIbar*, ii. 457. [2]IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, ii. 399. [3]AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Taḥbīr*, ii. 256. [4]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 372.

Chart 1a. Transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to women from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256, Samarqand) to *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī* (d. 816)

Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, d. 256, Samarqand

- **Ḥammād ibn Shākir al-Nasawī, d. *ca.* 290, Nasa**
  - **Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Rumḥ al-Nasawī, Nasa**
    - **al-Ḥākim Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥafiz, Nishapur**
      - **Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Khalaf**
        - **Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir al-Ḥāfiẓ, d. 550**
          - **Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzi, d. 597**
            - ***Jawharah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī*, Baghdad**
- **Ibrāhīm ibn Maʿqil al-Nasafī, d. 294**
  - **Abū Ṣāliḥ Khalaf ibn Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī**
    - **Abū l-Faḍl ʿĪsā ibn Abī ʿImrān al-Harawī**
      - **Abū ʿAlī al-Jayānī, d. 498, Andalus**
        - **ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Bāhilī**
          - **ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Dībājī**
            - **Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī al-Hamdānī, d. 636**
              - ***Zaynab bint Aḥmad ibn Shukr***
                - ***Juwayriyah bint Aḥmad al-Hakkāriyyah*, d. 783**
                - ***Ruqayyah bint Yarshud al-Ṣāliḥiyyah***
- **Abū Ṭalḥah Manṣūr ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, d. 329**
  - **Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz**
    - **Abū al-ʿAbbās Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Mustaghfirī**
      - **al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad**
        - **Abū Mūsā Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Madīnī**
          - **al-Nāṣiḥ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥanbalī, d. 634**
            - ***Amatullāh bint al-Nāṣiḥ*, d. 679**
          - **Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī**
            - **Sulaymān ibn Ḥamzah ibn Abī ʿUmar, Damascus**
              - ***Fāṭimah bint al-Munajjā*, d. 803**
- **Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Maṭar al-Firabrī, d. 320, Firabr**
  - **Abū Ḥamid al-Nuʿaymī**
    - **Abū ʿUmar al-Mulayḥī**
      - **Khalaf ibn ʿAṭāʾ**
        - **Abū Rawḥ al-Harawī, d. 618**
          - ***Sitt al-Umanāʾ bint Abʾ Naṣr*, d. 689**
          - ***Ruqayyah bint ʿAbdillāh al-Anmāṭī***

Chart 1b. Transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to women
from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256, Samarqand)
to *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī* (d. 816)

Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Maṭar al-Firabrī, d. 320, Firabr

- **Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Shabbūyah**
  - **Saʿīd ibn Aḥmad al-ʿAyyār, d. 457**
    - **Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Furāwī, d. 530**
      - ***Ṣafiyyah bint ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Naysābūriyyah*, d. 603**
      - ***Zaynab bint Ibrāhīm al-Qaysī*, d. 610**
    - ***ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Naṣr al-Aṣbahānī*, Isfahan**
    - ***Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad*, d. 539, Baghdad**
    - **Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl-Fārisī**
      - **al-Muʾayyad al-Ṭūsī, d. 617**
        - ***Sitt al-ʿArab bint Yaḥyā*, d. 684**
        - ***Ḥabbūnah* (the grandmother of al-Birzālī)**
      - ***Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*, d. 615**
        - ***Sayyidah bint Mūsā al-Marāniyyah*, d. 695**
- **Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Mustamlī**
  - **Ḥāfiẓ Abū Dharr al-Harawī**
    - ***Khadījah al-Shantajyālī*, Andalus**
    - **ʿĪsā ibn Abī Dharr al-Harawī**
      - **ʿAlī ibn Ḥumayd al-Ṭarābulasī**
        - **ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Ḥaramī al-Makkī, d. 645**
          - ***Zaynab bint Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī*, Makkah**
          - **Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṭabarī, d. 722**
            - ***Fāṭimah bint Aḥmad al-Ḥarāzī*, d. 783, Makkah**
- **Abū al-Haytham Muḥammad ibn Makkī al-Kushmīhanī, d. 389**
  - **Ḥāfiẓ Abū Dharr al-Harawī**
  - **Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥafṣī**
    - **Wajīh al-Dīn Ṭāhir al-Shaḥḥāmī**
      - ***Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*, d. 615**
        - ***Asmāʾ bint Zayn al-Umanāʾ*, d. 680**
  - ***Karīmah al-Marwaziyyah*, d. 463, Makkah**
  - **Abū al-Khayr ibn Abī ʿImrān**
    - **Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Kushmīhanī, Kushmihan**
      - ***Sharīfah bin Aḥmad al-Nasawī*, Nasa**

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Chart 1c. Transmission of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to women from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī (d. 256, Samarqand) to *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī* (d. 816)

- Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Maṭar al-Firabrī, d. 320, Firabr
  - Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, d. 381, Sarakhs
    - Ḥāfiẓ Abū Dharr al-Harawī
    - ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar al-Dāwūdī, d. 467
      - *Umm al-Faḍl ʿĀʾishah al-Būshanjiyyah*, d. 541, Bushanj
      - Abū l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal ibn ʿĪsā, d. 553, Baghdad
        - Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Rūzbah, d. 633
          - *Sitt al-Dār bint Majd al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah*, d. 686
        - ʿUmar ibn Karam, d. 629
          - *Zāhidah bint Isḥāq*
        - *Tāj al-Nisāʾ bint Rustam*, d. 610, Makkah
        - *Āminah bint Abī Bakr*
        - *ʿAfīfah bin Abī ʿUthmān*
        - *Ḥūr Zan bint Majd al-Dīn*
        - *Nūr Sittī bint Saʿd al-Dīn*
        - *Umm al-Suʿdā bint Abī Ṭālib*
        - *Karīmah bint ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Zubayriyyah*, d. 641, Damascus
        - al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī, d. 631, Baghdad
          - *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿĪsā al-Maqdisiyyah*, d. 697
          - *Fāṭimah bint Ḥusayn al-Āmidiyyah*, d. 698
          - *Khadījah bint Muḥammad al-Marātibiyyah*, d. 699
          - *Khadījah bint Muḥammad al-Maqdisiyyah*, d. 701
          - *Khadījah bint al-Raḍī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān*, d. 701
          - *Zaynab bint Sulaymān al-Isʿardī*, d. 705
          - *Hadiyyah bint ʿAlī ibn ʿAskar*, d. 712
          - *Fāṭimah al-Baṭāʾiḥiyyah*, d. 711, Damascus
          - *Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ*, d. 716, Damascus, Cairo
            - *Juwayriyah bint Aḥmad al-Hakkāriyyah*, d. 783
            - *Fāṭimah bint Aḥmad al-Jazarī*, d. 766
            - *Fāṭimah bint al-Munajjā*, d. 803, Damascus
          - Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār, d. 730, Damascus
            - *Kulthum bint Muḥammad al-Baʿlī*, d. 777, Balabak
            - *ʿĀʾishah bint al-Sayf Abī Bakr*, d. 793
            - *Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad al-Amyūṭī*, d. 793
            - *Zaynab bint ʿUthmān ibn Luʾluʾ*, d. 800, Damascus
            - *Amat al-Raḥmān al-Baʿlabakiyyah*, Balabak
            - *Sitt al-Banīn bint Muḥammad al-Baʿliyyah*, Balabak
            - *Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī al-Makhzūmiyyah*
            - *Filfilah bint ʿAbdullāh al-Baʿlabakkiyyah*, Balabak
            - *ʿĀʾishah bint Ismāʿīl*
            - *Nasīb bint Ibrāhīm al-Ḥimṣiyyah*, Hims
            - *Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī*, d. 803, Damascus
            - *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī*, d. 816, Damascus

al-Sunan

The *Sunan*, like the *Jawāmi*ᶜ, are compilations of ḥadīths by topic arranged according to the divisions of *fiqh* – like *ṭahārah*, *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, ḥajj etc. – but are restricted to Prophetic ḥadīth only, and exclude *tafsīr*, history and other topics covered in the *Jawāmi*ᶜ.

Of many book compiled on this pattern, three make up the Six Books: *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (d. 275), Aḥmad ibn Shuᶜayb al-Nasaʾī (d. 303), of Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Mājah al-Qazwīnī (d. 273). Of almost equally high repute are: *Sunan* of ᶜAlī ibn ᶜUmar al-Dāraquṭnī (d. 385) and *Sunan al-kabīr* of Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī (d. 485). Many women studied these *Sunan*. One example for each must suffice:

Zaynab bint Makkī al-Ḥarrānī (d. 688) studied *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* with ᶜUmar ibn Ṭabrazad.[1] Āminah bint Taqī al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭī (d. 740) studied with her father *Sunan al-Nasaʾī* in the narration of Ibn al-Sunnī.[2] Ṣafiyyah bint ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Farrāʾ (d. 699) studied *Sunan Ibn Mājah* with Imām Muwaffaq al-Dīn ibn Qudāmah.[3] Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī al-Muqaddam studied *Sunan al-Dāraquṭnī*.[4] Sitt Quraysh Fāṭimah bint Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd (d. 879) studied *Sunan al-kabīr* of al-Bayhaqī with Nūr al-Dīn ibn Salāmah.[5]

al-Masānid

Masānid (pl. of *musnad*) refers to compilations of ḥadīth arranged by names of Companions and others who narrated them, rather than by topic. This reflects increasing interest in the scholarly references that come with the ḥadīth texts, rather than their relevance for the different divisions of *fiqh*. Among the famous *masānid* are: the *Musnad*s of Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150), al-Shāfiᶜī (d. 204), al-Ḥumaydī (d. 219), Musaddad ibn Musharhad (d. 228), Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241), of ᶜAbd ibn Ḥumayd (d. 249), and Abū Yaᶜlā al-Mawṣilī (d. 307). Again, just one example for each:

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[1] TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 372. [2] *Ibid.*, 359–60. [3] *Ibid.*, 379. [4] KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aᶜlām al-nisāʾ*, iv. 135. [5] AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Minjam fī-l-muᶜjam*, 123.

Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ Ajībah (d. 647) learnt *Musnad Abī Ḥanīfah*, in the version of Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Ḥārithī, from Abū l-Khayr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-Bāghbān;[1] she studied *Musnad al-Shāfiʿī* with Abū Zurʿah Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (d. 566),[2] and *Musnad al-Ḥumaydī* with two teachers: Abū l-Ḥasan Saʿdullāh ibn Naṣr al-Dajājī and Abū l-Maʿālī Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Bājisrāʾī.[3] Umm al-Ḥayā Zuhrah bint Muḥammad al-Anbārī (d. 633) studied *Musnad Musaddad ibn Musharad* with Yaḥyā ibn Thābit ibn Bundār.[4] Zaynab bint Makkī (d. 688) studied *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal* with Ḥanbal ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Ruṣāfī.[5] Asmāʾ bint Ibrāhīm ibn Sufyān ibn Mandah al-Aṣbahāniyyah (d. 630) studied *Musnad ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd* with Abū l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal ibn ʿĪsā al-Harawī.[6] Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr (d. 600) studied *Musnad Abī Yaʿlā* with Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir.[7] (For the names of other women who studied the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal, see Chart 2 on the next page.)

al-Maʿājim and *al-Mashyakhāt*

Maʿājim (pl. of *muʿjam*): a compilation in which the ḥadīths are arranged according to the names of the Companions or other narrators or of the cities that they were most associated with. *Mashyakhāt* (pl. of *mashyakhah*): an arrangement of ḥadīths by the shaykhs or teachers of those ḥadīths. Fāṭimah bint ʿAbdillāh al-Jūzdāniyyah (d. 524) studied al-Ṭabarānī's al-*Muʿjam al-kabīr* and *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr* with their most famous narrator, Ibn Rīdhah.[8] Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī studied *al-Muʿjam al-awsaṭ* of al-Ṭabarānī with Abū Naṣr ibn al-Shīrāzī.[9] (See Chart 3 on the next page.)

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 482–83. [2]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FASĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 383. [3]AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *Mashyakhah*, MS, 44. [4]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FASĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 366. [5]*Ibid.*, ii. 372. [6]*Ibid.*, ii. 357. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 482–83. [8]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xix. 505. [9]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 375.

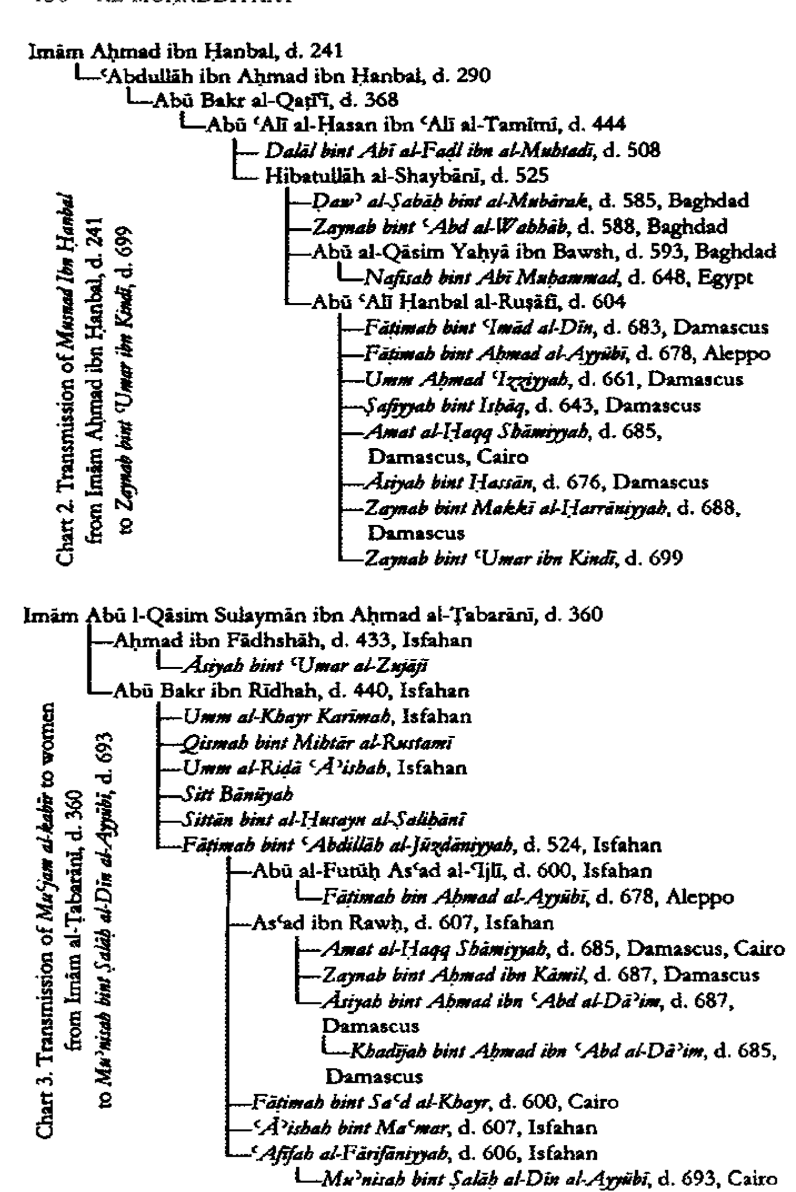


Chart 2. Transmission of *Musnad Ibn Ḥanbal* from Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, d. 241 to *Zaynab bint ʿUmar ibn Kindī*, d. 699

Chart 3. Transmission of *Muʿjam al-kabīr* to women from Imām al-Ṭabarānī, d. 360 to *Muʾnisah bint Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī*, d. 693

ʿĀʾishah bint Maʿmar ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn al-Fakīr al-Aṣbahāniyyah (d. 607) received *Muʿjam* of Abū Yaʿlā from Saʿīd al-Ṣayrafī.[1] Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 574) received *al-Muʿjam* of Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ismāʿīlī from Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Harīsah.[2] Asmāʾ bint Taqī al-Dīn al-Jāʿbarī studied *al-Mujʿam al-ṣaghīr* of al-Daqqāq with Abū l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī.[3]

Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah studied *Mashyakhah* of Ibn Shādhān with Abū Ghālib Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Baqillānī (d. 500).[4] Altī bint Baktāsh al-Rashīdī studied *Mashyakhah* of Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad al-Rāzī with three teachers – the sultan Asad al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ayyūbī, ʿImād al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār and ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Birzālī in 736 in the Madrasah al-Murshidiyyah.[5] In 631 Tāj-Khātūn bint al-ʿIzz Abī Bakr studied *Mashyakhah Ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim* with eight teachers: Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Ṭarkhān al-Ḥanbalī; Jamāl al-Dīn Abū ʿAlī Yūsuf ibn Isrāʾīl al-Nāṣirī; Zayn al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī al-Takrītī; Shihāb al-Dīn Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-ʿAṭṭār; Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Fāmī; Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿArab-shāh al-Farrāʾ; Shams al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillah Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Niʿmah Umm Muḥammad; Sitt al-ʿArab Zaynab bint ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Maqdisī.[6] Khadījah bint ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Mardāwī studied *Asnā al-maqāṣid wa aʿdhab al-awārid*, the *Mashyakhah* of Ibn al-Bukhārī with the author himself in 682.[7] Zuhrah bint ʿUmar al-Khutanī

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[1]DIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Tabbat al-masmūʿāt*, 87. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 109–10. [3]*Majmūʿ* containing *Muʿjam mashāikh Abī ʿAbdillāh al-Daqqāqī*, 321. [4]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 626. [5]See *samāʿāt* in *Majlis al-Biṭāqah* in *Amālī Ḥamzah al-Kinānī*, MS Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyyah, Damascus. [6]See MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī*, 468–69. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 258–59.

studied the *Mashyakhah* of Abū Ṭālib al-ʿUshārī with Ibn Ṭabrazad.[1]

al-Arbaʿūnāt

The term refers to compilations of 'forty ḥadīths'. There are many of these selected by different scholars around themes or topics or narrators. I mention here a few of the more popular:

Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr ibn al-Khallāl (d. 691) studied *al-Arbaʿūn* of Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Aslam al-Kindī al-Ṭūsī (d. 242) with Abū l-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥibatullāh al-Hamadhānī in 635.[2] Fākhirah al-Baghdādiyyah (6th c.) learnt *al-Arbaʿūn* of Ḥasan ibn Sufyān al-Nasaʾī from ʿAbd al-Ghāfir ibn Muḥammad al-Fārisī.[3] Umm al-Bahāʾ Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Faḍl Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (d. 539) received *al-Arbaʿūn* of al-Jawzaqī Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh (d. 388) from Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn Abī Saʿīd al-ʿAyyān al-Ṣūfī.[4] Umm al-Faḍl Muʾminah bint Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd studied *al-Arbaʿūn* of Abū Bakr ibn al-Muqrī with Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd al-Mālik al-Khallād, and Abū Muḥammad Bakhtyār ibn Muḥammad in 532.[5]

Later, Imām Nawawī's *al-Arbaʿūn* became the most popular. Sutaytah bint al-Zayn Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad (d. 879) studied it with her father in 792.[6]

al-Ajzāʾ

Ajzāʾ (plural of *juzʾ*) meaning component section of something, here referring to the ḥadīths of just one person or ḥadīths collected on just one topic. The number of *ajzāʾ* grew to thousands. From the beginning of the fourth century onward women had great interest in studying them. Again, just a few examples must suffice.

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[1] *Ibid.*, i. 303. [2] See LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 140, 216. [3] ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Tabbat al-mamuʿāt*, 78. [4] *Ibid.*, 123. [5] See *samāʿāt* at the end of *al-Arbaʿūn* of Ibn al-Muqrī in TAKLAH, *Jamharah al-Ajzāʾ al-ḥadīthiyyah*, 135–36. [6] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 60.

Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah studied the most famous *Juzʾ ibn ʿArafah* with its highest narrator Ibn Bayān;[1] *Juzʾ Ḥanbal* with Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Ṭuyūrī[2] and *Juzʾ Hilāl al-Ḥaffār* with Ṭirād.[3] Zaynab bint Makkī al-Ḥarrānī (d. 688) studied the *juzʾ* with next highest *isnād*, *al-Ghaylāniyyāt*, with ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad.[4] Sitt al-ʿArab bint Yaḥyā al-Kindī (d. 684) studied the third highest, *Juzʾ al-Anṣārī* with her master Abū l-Yumn al-Kindī.[5] Amat al-Ḥamīd Khadījah bint Abī Ghānim studied *Juzʾ mā qaruba* of al-Samarqandī (d. 536) in 529.[6] Umm al-Ḍiyāʾ Sitt al-Jalīl bint Abī l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Warkānī (6th c.) studied *Juzʾ Luwayn* with Abū Bakr ibn Mājah.[7] Umm al-Bahāʾ Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn Abī Saʿd al-Baghdādī (d. 539) received *Juzʾ al-Baytūta* from Saʿīd al-ʿAyyār.[8] Nūr Sittī bint ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Rāzī (6th c.) studied *Kitāb Thawāb al-aʿmāl* of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥātim al-Rāzī with her grandfather Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Bayāḍī.[9] Umm al-Khayr Jamāl al-Nisāʾ bint Abī Bakr al-Baghdādiyyah studied *Juzʾ Ibn al-Baṭṭī* with its author Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Baṭṭī.[10] Khadījah bint Abī Bakr al-Ḥamawī studied *Aḥādīth Ṭālūt* of Abū ʿUthmān Ṭālūt ibn ʿAbbād al-Ṣayrafī (d. 238) with ʿAbd al-Jalīl ibn Abī Ghālib al-Surayjānī in a *ribāṭ* of Damascus in 610.[11] Umm al-Ḥayā Zuhrah bint Muḥammad al-Anbārī (d. 633) studied *Juzʾ al-Bānyāsī* with Ibn al-Baṭṭī.[12] Zaynab bint ʿAlī al-Wāsiṭī (d. 695) studied *Majlis al-Biṭāqah* of Abū l-Qāsim Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Kinānī (d. 357) with Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl,

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 504–16. [2]See *samāʿāt* at the end of *Juzʾ Ḥanbal.* [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 276–77. [4]ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 372. [5]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, i. 288. [6]See *samāʿāt* in *Muqaddimah* of *Juzʾ mā qaruba sanadu-hu min ḥadīth* of Abī l-Qāsim Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad al-Samarqandī. [7]AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Taḥbīr*, ii. 242. [8]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 158. [9]AL-SAMʿĀNĪ, *al-Muntakab min Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, iii. 1923. [10]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-mufharas*, 248. [11]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 119, 290. [12]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 214–21, and *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 238–40.

Khaṭīb Mardā in 653.[1] Umm ʿAbd al-Ḥakam Sitt al-ʿIbād bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Salāmah al-Miṣriyyah (d. 616) studied *al-Khilaʿiyyāt* with its famous narrator Ibn Rifāʿah.[2] Khadījah bint ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn ʿUthmān studied *Juzʾ al-Fīl* with Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisī and ʿIzz al-Dīn Abū l-Fidāʾ Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Farrāʾ in 693 in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in Qāsyūn.[3]

al-Musalsalāt

The term *musalsal* refers to a ḥadīth around the narration of which there is some particular association that the tradition has deemed worthy of preserving, along with the ḥadīth itself. An example would be the Prophet's shaking someone's hand just before he said what the ḥadīth records, or giving them a date and water, etc.; then, each time that this ḥadīth is passed on the teacher will shake the student's hand, or give out a date and water, etc. Much charm and pleasure is added to the teaching and learning of ḥadīths by these associations, and remembering one's lessons is facilitated by them. There are many ḥadīths narrated as *musalsalāt*.

al-Musalsal bi-l-ʿawwaliyyah. This is the ḥadīth of ʿAbdullāh ibn Āmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ that the Prophet *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa-sallam* said: 'Those who show mercy, the Most Merciful bestows mercy upon them. Show mercy to those who are in the earth, the One who is in heaven will have mercy upon you.' It is narrated from Ibn ʿUyaynah, who narrated it from ʿAmr ibn Dīnar, from Abū Qābūs, from his master ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr ibn al-Āṣ. His student ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Bishr al-Ḥakam heard it from him as his first ḥadīth; then it became a tradition that students would hear this as their first ḥadīth from their teachers. It has continued to this day. There are many women who received this ḥadīth. Here are some examples: Ḥasanah bint Muḥammad ibn Kāmil

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[1] LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 33, 314. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 611–620), 291. [3] See MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī*, 291.

al-Ḥasaniyyah (d. 765) heard it from al-Tawzarī through the *isnād* of Ibn al-Samarqandī.[1] Umm al-Ḥasan bint Muḥammad ibn ᶜAbd al-Muḥsin al-Makhzūmī heard this ḥadīth with her sister Ṣafiyyah from al-Sharīf Abū l-Khayr ibn Abī ᶜAbdillāh al-Makhzūmī in 742.[2] Khadījah bint Abī Bakr ibn ᶜAlī known as Bint al-Kūrī (d. 803) heard it from Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ḥarrānī.[3] Zaynab bint Muḥibb al-Dīn Abū l-ᶜAbbād Aḥmad ibn Ẓahīrah al-Qurashī (d. 863) heard it from the qāḍī Zayn al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Murāghī.[4] Ghazāl Umm ᶜAbd al-Laṭīf al-Nūbiyyah (d. 802) heard it from its famous narrator al-Maydūmī (d. 754).[5]

Some traditionists compiled the *musalsalāt* they received from their teachers as books, which made it easier to study and transmit them. Women also heard some of these books of *musalsalāt* with their teachers. Sitt al-ᶜArab bint Muḥammad ibn Fakhr al-Dīn al-Bukhārī (d. 767) heard *Musalsalāt al-Ibrāhīmī* from her grandfather.[6] Umm Kulthūm ᶜĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Murshidī (d. 846) heard *Musalsal al-ᶜAlāʾī* from Majd al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.[7] Fāṭimah bint al-Munajjā heard *Nuzhat al-ḥuffāẓ* of Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī from Taqī al-Dīn Sulaymān ibn Ḥamzah.[8] Shuhdah al-Baghdādiyyah studied *al-Muṣāfaḥah* of al-Barqānī.[9] Umm Muḥammad Sitt al-Kull Āsiyah bint Jarullāh Muḥammad al-Makkī studied *Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah* and *Musalsal li-khatm l-duᶜāʾ* with Sharaf al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim al-Rāfiᶜī.[10]

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[1] DIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *al-ᶜIqd al-thamīn*, vi. 377. [2] IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 157. [3] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiᶜ*, xii. 26. [4] IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 1434. [5] AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiᶜ*, xii. 85. [6] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaᶜ al-muʾassas*, iii. 42—28. IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 157. [8] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaᶜ al-muʾassas*, iii. 360. [9] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aᶜlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 88. [10] IBN FAHD, *K. Nayl al-Munā*, i. 217–18.

THE READING LIST OF UMM HĀNĪ BINT NŪR AL-DĪN AL-HŪRĪNIYYAH (d. 871)[1]

She studied:

with Najm al-Din ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. ʿAbd al-Karīm b. al-Ḥusayn b. Razīn and Ṣalāḥ al-Din Muḥammad b. Muhammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿUmar al-Zaftāwī: *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*

with ʿAfīf al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad al-Nashāwarī: *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* •*al-Arbaʿīn al-Mukharrajah min Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī bi riwāyat al-Muḥammadīn min ḥadīth Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAlī ibn Yāsir al-Jayānī* •*Juzʾ* from *Fawāʾid Abī Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿUbaydillāh al-Ḥarfī* •*Juzʾ* with *Manām Ḥamzah b. Ḥabīb al-Zayyāt min ḥadīth Ibn Ghalbūn* •*Juzʾ* with *Ḥadīth Ḥalīmah al-Saʿdiyyah li-Abī l-Ḥasan b. Ṣakhr* • *Juzʾ* from *Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥarb al-Ṭāʾī* • *Juzʾ* with *Gharāʾib al-asānīd li-Abī l-Ghanāʾim al-Narsī* •*al-Arbaʿīn al-mukhtārah fī faḍl khiṣāl al-ḥajj wa-l-ziyārah li-Ibn Masʿūdī* •*al-Juzʾ al-thānī min Ḥadīth Saʿdān b. Naṣr* • *Fawāʾid al-ʿIrāqiyyīn li-l-Naqqāsh* •*al-Arbaʿīn al-Subāʿiyyāt li-ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. ʿAbdillāh al-Furāwī* •*Sudāsiyyāt Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Rāzī* •*Juzʾ al-Jumūʿah li-l-Nasaʾī* •*Juzʾ Ibn Nujayd* •*al-Majālis al-khamsah al-sudāsiyyāt* •*ʿAwālī Ṭirād* in two *juzʾ* (*takhrīj al-Bardānī*) •*Maqāṣid al-sawm li-l-Imām ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām* •*Juzʾ* with *Majlisan fī faḍl Rajab min imlāʾ al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Qāsim b. ʿAsākir* •*Juzʾ* with *al-Ṭaqbīl wa-l-muʿānaqah wa-l-muṣāfaḥah li-Abī Saʿīd Muḥammad b. Ziyād al-Aʿrabī* •*Juzʾ* with *Ḥadīth al-Qāḍī Abū l-Faraj al-Muʿafā b. Zakariyyā* •*Juzʾ* with *ʿAwālī Abī l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal b. ʿĪsā al-Harawī* (*takhrīj Abī Muḥammad Yūnus b. Yaḥyā al-Hāshimī*) •*Juzʾ* with *Faḍl Ramaḍān siyāmi-hi wa-qiyāmi-hi li-Abī l-Yumn ʿAbdillāh b. al-Imām Abī l-Ḥasan b. ʿAsākir* •*Juzʾ* with *Ḥadīth Dhī l-Nūn al-Miṣrī* •*Nuskhah Abī Muʿāwiyah Muḥammad b. Khāzim al-Ḍarīr* •*Juzʾ* with *Ḥadīth Abī Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd...* •*al-Juzʾ al-sābiʿ min Ḥadīth Abī ʿAmr b. al-Sammāk* (*intiqāʾ Abī Ḥafṣ al-Baṣrī*) •*al-Arbaʿīn al-Thaqafiyyah* •*Masʾalat al-ijāzah li-l-majhūl wa-l-maʿdūm li-l-Khaṭīb* •*Juzʾ* containing *Faḍl Rajab wa-ghayri-hi li-l-Khallāl* •*al-Majālis al-Makkiyyah li-l-Mayyāshī* •*Khumasiyyāt Ibn al-Naqqūr* •*Juzʾ Kākū* •*Juzʾ* with *Majlisān min Amālī al-Wazīr Niẓām al-Mulk* •*al-Arbaʿīn li-Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Furāwī* •*Juzʾ* with *al-Miʾat al-ʿawālī min masmuʿāti-hī* •*Masāʾil Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā min al-Imām al-*

[1] AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Muʿjam fī l-muʿjam*, 101–03.

Shāfiʿī raḍi al-lāhu ʿan-hu •*Juzʾ Abī Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh b. Sulaymān al-Ḥaḍramī* •*Juzʾ al-Biṭāqah* •*al-Juzʾ al-sabīʿ min Musalsalāt al-Ḥāfiẓ Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Masaddī al-Mushtamil ʿalā l-musalsal bi-l-ʿadd fī l-yad* •*Faḍl Shaʿbān li-l-Imām Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl b. Abī l-Ṣayf al-Yamanī* •*Qirā al-ḍayf li-Ibn Abī l-Dunyā* •*al-Sīrah li-l-Ṭabarī* •*Musalsalāt Ibn Shādhān* •*Tusāʿiyyāt al-Raḍī al-Ṭabarī* •*Faḍāʾil Rajab li-Abī Muḥammad al-Khallāl*
with Abū l-Faraj b. al-Shaykhah: *al-Arbaʿin al-mawsumah bi shiʿār aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth li-l-Ḥākim* •*Juzʾ* with *Anāshīd Abī Ghālib Shujāʿ b. Fāris al-Dhuhlī*
with Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī al-Makkī al-Mālikī: *Tusāʿiyyāt al-Raḍī al-Ṭabarī* • *al-Juzʾ al-sabīʿ min Musalsalāt Ibn Masaddī* • *Faḍl Shaʿbān li-Ibn Abī l-Ṣayf* • *Juzʾ al-Biṭāqah*
with Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ẓahīrah: *al-Arbaʿīn al-mukhtārah li-Ibn Masaddī* • *al-Awwal min Musalsalāt al-ʿAllāf*, and a *juzʾ* containing *al-Muslasal bi-innī uḥibbu-ka* of Raḍī al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī.
with Muḥibb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. al-Raḍī Ibrāhīm al-Ṭabarī: *Musalsalāt al-Dībājī*
with Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Dhubā al-Miṣrī: *al-Ghaylāniyyāt.*



Interior. Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyyah, Damascus.
(Photo: Yahya Michot)

Chapter 6

Women's role in diffusion of 'the knowledge'

The women who had knowledge of the religion transmitted that knowledge to men as well as women. Indeed, given that the majority of students of ḥadīth were men, we would expect the majority of the women's students to have been men. Their numbers varied in different periods, but in some periods were very high: for example, al-Dhahabī in his account of Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Najjār (d. 643) reports from Ibn al-Sāʿātī that '[Ibn al-Najjār's] teachers included 3000 men and 400 women.'[1] It should suffice as evidence of the authority of women in preserving and transmitting the *Sunnah* of God's Messenger that some of the greatest of his Companions and, after them, some of the greatest imāms and jurists in the history of Islamic scholarship relied on women teachers.

THE COMPANIONS AND THE SCHOLARS AFTER THEM

Among the Companions who narrated from ʿĀʾishah are: her father, Abū Bakr; ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb; ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar; Abū Hurayrah; Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī; ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās; Rabīʿah ibn ʿAmr al-Jurashī; al-Sāʾib ibn Yazīd; ʿAmr ibn al-ʿĀṣ; Zayd ibn Khālid al-Juhanī; ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿĀmir ibn Rabīʿah; ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal and others. In addition, in the major compilations of ḥadīth, there are over 300 narrators from ʿĀʾishah: al-Mizzī has listed them, in alphabetical order,

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 133.

together with references to the books where their ḥadīths are recorded.[1] Among the men scholars who narrated from Umm Salamah are: Usāmah ibn Zayd ibn Ḥārithah al-Kalbī, al-Aswad ibn Yazīd al-Nakhaʿī, Ḥabīb ibn Abī Thābit, Ḥumayd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf, Dhakwān Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Sammān, Saʿīd ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Maqburī, Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab, Sulaymān ibn Yasār, Abū Wāʾil Shaqīq ibn Salamah al-Asadī, ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī, ʿAbdullāh ibn Buraydah al-Aslamī, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUbaydullāh ibn Abī Mulaykah, ʿAbdullāh ibn Wahb ibn Zamʿah, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUtbah, ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr, ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ, ʿAṭāʾ ibn Yasār, ʿIkrimah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, Kurayb the *mawlā* of Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid ibn Jabr al-Makkī, Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn, Masrūq ibn al-Ajdaʿ, Nāfiʿ the *mawlā* of Ibn ʿUmar, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, Abū Salamah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAwf, Abū ʿUthmān al-Nahdī.[2] Among the narrators from Ḥafṣah are: Ḥārithah ibn Wahb al-Khuzāʿī, her brother ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, Abū Bakr ibn Sulaymān ibn Abī Khaythamah and others.[3]

The Companions narrated also from women other than the wives of the Prophet. ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, a prominent figure of knowledge among the Companions narrated from Maymūnah, a slave of the Prophet.[4] From Durrah bint Abī Lahab, ʿAlī narrated that she said that the Messenger of God, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam,* said: 'No living person should be given hurt through [criticism of] a dead person.'[5] The Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz narrated: 'The righteous woman, Khawlah bint Ḥakīm, the wife of ʿUthmān ibn Maẓʿūn narrated that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – came out holding in his arms the two sons of his daughter saying: 'By God, you cause [one to be] undisciplined (*tujahhilū-nā*), cowardly (*tujabbinū-*

[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 228–33. [2] *Ibid.*, 317–19. [3] *Ibid.*, 154. [4] *Ibid.*, 313. [5] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʿāb*, ii. 726.

nā) and miserly (*tubakhkhilū-na*); and [yet also] you are indeed as a flower of Paradise.'[1] The great *tābiʿī* scholar Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab also narrated from Khawlah bint Ḥakīm. ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī narrated from Rāyiḍah bint Karāmah.[2]

In the next generation, Muḥammad ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124) narrated ḥadīth from ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Saʿd ibn Zurārah al-Anṣāriyyah, Nadbah the *mawlāh* of Maymūnah, Fāṭimah al-Khuzāʿiyyah, Hind bint al-Ḥārith al-Fārisiyyah and Umm ʿAbdillāh al-Ḍawsiyyah. Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn narrated that Abū Ḥanīfah narrated from ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAjrad that she said: 'I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: The largest army of God in the earth are locusts. I do not eat them and I do not forbid them.'[3] Imām Mālik (d. 179) narrated from ʿĀʾishah bint Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ al-Madaniyyah (d. 117). Among other narrators from her are: Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUqbah, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, al-Juʿayd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, Junāḥ al-Najjār, al-Ḥakam ibn ʿUtaybah, Khuzaymah, Ṣakhr ibn Juwayriyyah, Abū l-Zinād ʿAbdullāh ibn Dhakwān, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUbaydah al-Rabadhī, ʿUthmān ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Waqqāṣī, Abū Qudāmah ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUbaydillāh ibn ʿUmar al-ʿUmarī, Muḥammad ibn Bijād ibn Mūsā ibn Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ, Muhājir ibn Mismār, Yūsuf ibn Yaʿqūb ibn al-Mājishūn and others.[4]

MAJOR SCHOLARS WHO NARRATED FROM WOMEN

We find the same practice in the succeeding centuries. Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241), Abū Ibrāhīm al-Tarjumānī (d. 236), Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Jarjarāʾī (d. 240), Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Harawī (d. 244) and ʿAlī ibn Muslim al-Ṭūṣī (d. 253) narrated from Umm ʿUmar bint Ḥassān ibn Zayd al-Thaqafī.[5]

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[1] IBN BISHKWĀL, *Ghawāmiḍ al-asmāʾ al-mubhamah*, i. 272–73. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, iv. 299. [3] IBN AL-ATHĪR, *Usd al-ghābah*, vii. 190. [4] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 236. [5] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 432.

Qāḍī Abū Yaʿlā al-Farrāʾ (d. 458), al-Azharī, al-Tanūkhī, al-Ḥusayn ibn Jaʿfar al-Salmāsī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ḥasnūn al-Narsī and Abū Khāzim ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Farrāʾ narrated from Amat al-Salām bint al-Qāḍī Abī Bakr Aḥmad ibn Kāmil ibn Khalaf ibn Shajarah al-Baghdādīyyah (d. 390).[1]

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ʿAsākir (d. 571) narrated from over 80 women, and dedicated a whole book to biographical accounts of them. His colleague Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī (d. 562) wrote down accounts of 69 women from whom he heard ḥadīth directly or who wrote *ijāzah*s to him. Ḥāfiẓ Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī (d. 576) studied ḥadīth with tens of women scholars, Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597) narrated from three, and Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī (d. 600) narrated from 'a number'.

In the seventh century, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630), Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643), and al-Ḍiyāʾ al-Maqdisī (d. 643), all narrated from several women teachers. Ḥāfiẓ al-Mundhirī (d. 656) narrated from a large number of women and provided accounts of them in *al-Takmilah li wafayāt al-naqalah*, and Muḥibb al-Ṭabrī (d. 694) also narrated from 'a number' of women.

Imām Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728), probably the greatest thinker and jurist of his time, received ḥadīth from a number of women and included some ḥadīths from them in his *Forty Ḥadīths*. He expressed very high esteem for their knowledge, understanding and intelligence, as well as their righteousness and piety, and he praised some of them fulsomely for their efforts in preaching and reform. Similarly, the following imāms studied with women: Ibn Jamāʿah (d. 733); Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (d. 734); Abū l-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī (d. 742) narrated from some of them in his *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*; Imām al-Dhahabī (d. 748) narrated from them in *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, *Tāʾrikh al-Islām*, and *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*; Imām Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 751); Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿAlāʾī (d. 761); Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 771) narrated from them and provided accounts of them in his *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*; likewise: Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr (d. 774); al-

[1] *Ibid.*, 443.

Zarkashī (d. 794); Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī (d. 795); al-Bulqīnī (d. 805); Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Faḍl al-ʿIrāqī (d. 806); Ḥāfiẓ Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī (d. 807); Ḥāfiẓ Walī al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī (d. 826). Ḥāfiẓ Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī (d. 832) mentioned some women teachers in his *Dhayl al-Taqyīd* and other books; Ibn al-Jazarī (d. 833) mentioned some of them in his *Taʾrīkh*; Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852) mentioned them in his *Muʿjam* and gave accounts of them in *al-Durar al-kāminah* and *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*; Najm al-Dīn Ibn Fahd (d. 885) provided accounts of his women teachers in his *Muʿjam*; so too Ḥāfiẓ Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 902) in *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*; and Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī narrated from them and wrote biographical notices on them in his *Muʿjam* and other books.

HUSBANDS NARRATING FROM THEIR WIVES

Some of the *muḥaddithāt* attained such eminence in the knowledge that it is unsurprising to find their husbands becoming their students and referring to them for the solution of different scholarly and juristic issues. Hishām ibn Saʿīd narrated that he called on Muʿādh ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Ḥabīb al-Juhanī: 'Muʿādh asked his wife: When should the child pray? She said: A man from our people mentioned from the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – that he was asked about that and he said: When [the child] knows his right from his left, command him to pray.'[1] Karīmah bint al-Miqdād ibn al-Aswad al-Kindīyyah (*tābiʿiyyah*) is another example of a woman whose husband ʿAbdullāh ibn Wahb ibn Zamʿah narrated from her.[2] Isḥāq ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Abī Ṭalḥah narrated from his wife Umm Yaḥyā Ḥumaydah bint Ubayy ibn Rifāʿah al-Anṣārīyyah al-Zuraqiyyah.[3]

Fāṭimah bint al-Mundhir ibn al-Zubayr ibn al-ʿAwwām is considered one of the great scholars and jurists among the

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[1] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *matā yuʾmaru al-ghulām bi-l-ṣalāh*. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, xii. 475. [3] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 159.

Successors to the Companions. She knew a lot of ḥadīths, mostly through her grandmother Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr. Great imāms narrated from her including Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq, the author of the famous *Sīrah*. Most of her ḥadīths that are found in all the major compilations are through her husband Hishām ibn ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr, one of the teachers of Imāms Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Shuʿbah, Sufyān al-Thawrī and others. I will mention here a few examples of her ḥadīths narrated by her husband. Hishām narrated from his wife Fāṭimah from her grandmother Asmāʾ that she said: 'A woman came to the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and said: 'O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – I have a daughter who is a bride: she has a disease (*ḥaṣbah*) that has thinned her hair. Can I join [another's hair] to it? The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: The curse of God is on the one who joins [another's hair in this way] and the one who asks for [this].' (This ḥadīth is narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nasaʾī and Ibn Mājah.[1]) Hishām says: 'Fāṭimah narrated to me from Asmāʾ that she said: 'We ate meat of one of our horses in the time of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*.'[2] Hishām narrated from Fāṭimah from Asmāʾ that she said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said to me: Give [of your wealth], spend [from it] and pay out; do not cling to it, otherwise God will hold it over you; do not count [it] otherwise God will count [it] over you.'[3] Hishām also narrated from her the long ḥadīth, found in the

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Libās*, bāb *al-waṣl fī al-shaʿr*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Libās*, bāb *taḥrīm fiʿl al-wāṣilah wa-l-mustawṣilah wa-l-wāshimah*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, Zīnah, b. *laʿn al-wāṣilah wa-l-mustawṣilah*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, Nikāḥ, bāb *al-wāṣilah wa-l-mustawṣilah*. [2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Dhabāʾiḥ*, bāb *al-naḥr wa al-dhibḥ*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣayd wa-l-dhabāʾiḥ*, bāb *fī akl luḥūm al-khayl;* AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *al-ḍaḥāyā*, bāb *al-rukhṣah fī naḥr ma yudhbaḥ*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Dhabāʾiḥ*, bāb *luḥūm al-khayl*. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāh*, bāb *al-taḥrīḍ ʿalā al-ṣadaqah*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Zakāh*, *bāb al-ḥathth ʿalā l-infāq wa karāhat al-iḥṣāʾ*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Zakāh*, bāb *al-iḥṣāʾ fī l-ṣadaqah*.

*Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, about the prayer on the occasion of solar eclipse.[1]

Fāṭimah, the daughter of Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī Aḥmad al-Samarqandī (d. 540) the author of *Tuḥfat al-fuqahā*ʾ, was herself a great scholar and jurist, and renowned for it. She was married to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Masʿūd al-Kāsānī, the author of *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ*. Ibn al-ʿAdīm says: 'My father narrated that she used to quote the Ḥanafī *madhhab* (doctrine) very well. Her husband al-Kāsānī sometimes had some doubts and erred in the [issuing of a] fatwa; then she would tell him the correct opinion and explain the reason for [his] mistake.'[2] An example from the ninth century is Fāṭimah bint Yaḥyā. Al-Shawkānī (d. 1255) says about her: 'She was famous for her knowledge. She had debates with her father on several juristic issues. He father the imām confirmed that Fāṭimah applies *ijtihād* in deriving rulings. This indicates that she was prominent in the knowledge for the imām would not say something like that except for one who deserved it.'[3] Her father married her to al-Muṭahhar ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn Muḥammad (d. 879), who referred to her in the judgement of difficult juristic issues. Whenever a complicated issue was brought to him and to his students he would go to his wife and seek the solution from her. His students would then say: 'This is not from you. This is from behind the curtain.'[4]

CHILDREN LEARNING FROM THEIR MOTHERS

We know from biographies of many of the great scholars in Islam that an important factor in the success they had in combining piety, righteousness and knowledge was the foundation in education they had been given by their mothers. The practice

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *man lam yatwaḍḍaʾ illā min al-ghashy al-muthqil*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *mā ʿuriḍa ʿalā l-nabī ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam fī ṣalāt al-kusūf*. [2] ʿAbd al-Qādir AL-QURASHĪ, *al-Jawāhir al-muḍiyyah fī ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanafiyyah*, iv. 4. [3] AL-SHAWKĀNĪ, *al-Badr al-ṭāliʿ*, ii. 24. [4] See AL-ḤIBASHĪ, *Muʿjam al-nisāʾ al-Yamaniyyāt*, 149.

of introducing children to the ways of the religion at a young age was, as we saw in an earlier chapter, encouraged by the Prophet himself. Accordingly, mothers were motivated to bring children to the assemblies of learning, and to the mosques. Some of the children who came must have been very young indeed. ʿĀʾishah has narrated that the children were brought to the Messenger of God, then he would bless them and do *taḥnīk* (the ceremony of softening up a date, then putting a piece of it in the newborn's mouth). On one occasion when a baby soiled his clothes with urine, the Prophet simply called for water, which was poured over the affected part.[1] The women's being in the mosques with children was certainly not forbidden. On the contrary, as we saw earlier, the Prophet was aware of it and if, during the prayer, he heard a baby cry, he would shorten the recitation in order to relieve the mother of distress and distraction.[2]

The following incident, reported by Abū Burdah ibn Abī Mūsā al-Ashʿarī, sheds light on how mothers would impress the *sunnah*s on their children's minds. In this instance, the mother gets Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī to explain to their son something that he had had the opportunity to explain but failed to do so:

I was with my father Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī in the house of Umm al-Faḍl. She sneezed [and said *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāh*], then my father said to her: May God be merciful to you. Then I sneezed and he did not say it to me. When I came to my mother I told her [what happened]. When Abū Mūsā came home she said to him: My son sneezed in your presence and you did not pray for him and a woman sneezed and you prayed for her. He said: Your son sneezed and he did not praise God so I did not pray for him; whereas she sneezed and she praised God, so I prayed for her. I have heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: When someone sneezes in your presence, and he praises God, then pray for him, and if he does not praise Him, then do not pray for him. She said: You are right. You are right.[3]

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *ḥukm bawl al-ṭifl al-raḍīʿ wa kayfiyyati ghasli-hi.* [2]*Ibid.*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *amr al-aʾimmati bi takhfīfi al-ṣalāh fī tamām.* [3]AL-ḤĀKIM, *Mustadrak*, iv. 265.

Sometimes, the children were taught by explicit precept. For example, Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah narrates from Ibn al-Munkadir that he said: 'My mother said to me: O my son, do not joke to excess with the children, otherwise they will treat you lightly.'[1] At other times, the teaching was by allusion: ʿĀṣim ibn ʿAlī has narrated: ' ʿAbdullāh ibn Bakr ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Muzanī narrated to us saying: My mother told me that [my] father has vowed that whenever he heard two people disputing about destiny he would stand and pray two *rakʿah*s.'[2] However, the best thing mothers could teach their children was the responsibility to be active in seeking the knowledge for themselves by attending on those who had it, for that is the basis of the established tradition among the people of ḥadīth, to travel in search of the higher *isnād*, of greater nearness to the original. ʿAffān narrates from Shuʿbah that he said: 'My mother said to me: There is a woman here narrating ḥadīths from ʿĀʾishah. Go and learn ḥadīths from her. Then I went to her and received ḥadīths from her. The name of that woman was Shumaysah Umm Salamah.'[3]

CHILDREN NARRATING FROM THEIR MOTHERS

In this next ḥadīth four women Companions are narrating from each other, two of them wives of the Prophet and two of them their daughters. ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr narrated from Zaynab bint Abī Salamah, from Ḥabībah bint Umm Ḥabībah, from her mother from Zaynab bint Jaḥsh that she said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – woke up, his face red, and said: 'There is no god but God! Destruction is [coming] for the Arabs from an evil that is near. Today, there has opened in the wall of Gog and Magog [a breach] like this – and he indicated a circle [with his fingers]. She says: I said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – will we be destroyed when righteous

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[1] AL-WASHSHĀʾ, *al-Ẓarf wa-l-ẓurafāʾ*, 54. [2] ABŪ NUʿAYM AL-AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Ḥilyat awliyāʾ*, ii. 256. [3] BAḤSHAL, *Taʾrīkh Wāsiṭ*, 109.

people are among us? He said: Yes, when the evil becomes preponderant.'[1]

Yaḥyā ibn Bashīr ibn Khallād narrated from his mother that she called upon Muḥammad ibn Kaᶜb al-Quraẓī and heard him say: 'Abū Hurayrah narrated to me: The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Make the imām [stand] in the middle [of the rows in prayer] and fill the gaps [in the rows].'[2]

ᶜAbd Rabbiḥ ibn al-Ḥakam al-Thaqafī al-Ṭā'ifī narrated from his mother Bint Ruqayqah who narrated ḥadīth from her mother.[3]

ᶜĀmir al-Shaᶜbī narrated from Yaḥyā ibn Ṭalḥah, from his mother Suᶜdā al-Murriyyah that she said: 'ᶜUmar passed by Ṭalḥah after the death of the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – and said to him: Why are you so down-hearted? Do you dislike the rule of your cousin [i.e. Abū Bakr]? He said: No. Rather, [it is because] I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – say: I know a word, no one utters it at the time of his death, but that word will be a light for his book of deeds; his body and soul will get comfort at the time of death. I did not ask him before he passed away. [ᶜUmar] said: I know that word; it is the word that he wanted his uncle [Abū Ṭālib] to utter. Had he known anything better than that for his salvation he would have required him [to utter it].'[4]

Sufyān ibn ᶜUyaynah narrated from Ibn al-Munkadir, from Ibn Rumaythah, from his mother that she said: 'I called upon ᶜĀ'ishah. She prayed eight *rakᶜah*s at the time of forenoon. My mother asked her: Tell me from the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – anything [that he said] about this prayer.

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Aḥādith al-anbiyā'*, bāb *qiṣṣat ya'jūj wa ma'jūj*; *Fitan*, bāb *waylun li-l-ᶜarab min sharrin qad iqtarab*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan wa ashrāṭ al-ṣāᶜah*, bāb *iqtirāb al-fitan*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Fitan wa-l-malāḥim*, bāb *dhikr al-fitan wa dalā'ili-hā*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiᶜ*, *fitan*, bāb *mā jā'a fī khurūj ya'jūj wa ma'jūj*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Fitan*, bāb *mā yakūnu min al-fitan*; IBN ᶜASĀKIR, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisā'*, 71–72. [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *maqām al-imām min al-ṣaff*. [3] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 131–32. [4] IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Adab*, bāb *faḍl lā ilāha illa l-lāh*.

She said: I will not tell you anything about it from the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam.* But if my father could be brought back to life on the condition that I quite [doing these *rakʿah*s], I would not quit [them].'[1]

ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAwn narrated from al-Ḥasan from his mother, from Umm Salamah that she said: 'I will not forget the incident [during the preparations for the battle] of the Trench when the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was giving [the people] milk, and his chest-hair was dusty and he was saying: The good is the good of the hereafter, so [may God] forgive the Anṣār and the Muhājirūn.'[2]

ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid narrated saying: Umm Janūb bint Numaylah narrated to me from her mother Suwaydah bint Jābir, from her mother ʿUqaylah bint Asmar ibn Muḍarris from her father Asmar ibn Muḍarris that he said: 'I came to the Prophet and I pledged allegiance to him, then he said: Whoever comes to any water, where no Muslim has come before him, then it is his.'[3]

Kathīr ibn Farqad narrated from ʿAbdullāh ibn Mālik ibn Ḥudhayfah, from his mother al-ʿĀliyah bint Subayʿ that she said: 'I had sheep on Mt Uḥud, some of which died. Then I called on Maymūnah, the wife of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and I mentioned that to her. Maymūnah said to me: If you had taken their hides, you could have made use of them. [al-ʿĀliyah] said: Is it allowed (*ḥalāl*)? She said: Some people from Quraysh passed by the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – pulling a [dead] goat of theirs [behind them] as [one pulls] a donkey. The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said to them: If you had taken its hide! They said: It is dead. The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Tanning will purify [its hide].'[4]

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[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 180. [2] ABŪ NUʿAYM, *Ḥilyat awliyāʾ*, iii. 49. [3] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, Kharāj, bāb *fī iqṭāʿ al-araḍīn.* [4] *Ibid.*, *Libās*, bāb *fī uhub al-maytah.*

Among the Successors of the Companions, ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was renowned as a jurist and as a narrator. Among those who narrated from her was her son Abū l-Rijāl Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī, a number of whose narrations of ḥadīth are recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Nasaʾī and Ibn Mājah. [1]

THE MANNERS OF THE WOMEN SCHOLARS

The sources that record the work of the *muḥaddithāt* of later centuries do not provide much detail as to their manners, how they did their work. They are described not specifically but generally as pious, virtuous, deeply learned, intelligent, generous with their time and their wealth, and despite teaching for most of the day, of astonishing patience and forbearance. Also, about some of them, their rank in the field of ḥadīth is mentioned – either in the form of a title such as *musnidah*, or by quoting the judgements about them of famous students. By contrast, the scholars from the generation of the Companions and their Successors were far more present in the social space – they had to be for their knowledge to be passed on to many when they themselves were (relatively to the students) few in number. More specific accounts of their qualities are mentioned in the sources than is the case for the women teachers after them, who modelled their manners and character on theirs.

The study of ḥadīth texts and their chains of authority has many technical elements, suited to those with an academic bent. That said, the *Sunnah* which that scholarship is meant to serve is not an academic pursuit but a way of living. The scholars of ḥadīth, men and women, were aware that, as well as responsibilty for accurately preserving and transmitting the knowledge that was with them, they carried a responsibility to transmit to their students the best manners in thought, speech and action. They had to be mindful that they were passing on what had reached them of the teaching of God's Messenger, not what

[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 242.

might suit or serve a political or sectarian bias, nor what might improve their standing in this world. The best of the scholars were content with moral authority and kept clear of the temptations and burdens of political power. Insofar as women were further from those temptations, they were able to preserve a virtually flawless record for integrity and truthfulness in their reporting and in their personal conduct.

An excellent model of the virtues of the *muḥaddithāt* is the *tābiʿiyyah* Umm al-Dardāʾ. Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAblah narrates that a man came to her and told her that a certain individual had criticized her before the caliph, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān. She said: 'If we are rebuked for something that is not found in us, then very often we are also praised for something that is not in us.'[1] It is wonderful how gently she criticizes the one who sought to bring her into the caliph's disfavour, without needing to say she has no awe or dread of the caliph's rank and power. In fact, ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān used to attend her class in Damascus to learn the *fiqh* from her, and he sat as one among her other students.[2] Also, Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUbaydillāh has reported: 'ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān was sitting in the Rock [of Jerusalem] and Umm al-Dardāʾ was sitting with him [teaching]. When the *adhān* of *maghrib* was called, he stood up and she stood up leaning on ʿAbd al-Malik [and so they remained] until he entered the mosque with her. Then she sat with the women and ʿAbd al-Malik went forward to lead the prayer.'[3]

Umm al-Dardāʾ commanded such respect because she had achieved the humility that comes through *taqwā*, wariness of God. ʿAwn ibn ʿAbdillāh narrates: 'We used to come to [the assembly of] Umm al-Dardāʾ and remember God there.'[4] She was, in addition to teaching, famously relentless in devotions. Yūnus ibn Maysarah reports: 'The women used to worship with Umm al-Dardāʾ and when they became weak from standing they

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[1] IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 432. [2] IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah*, *sub anno* 82. [3] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, iv. 279. [4] *Ibid.*, iv. 278.

would lean on ropes.'[1] Intensity of worship is also reported of other women teachers: Ḥāfiẓ al-Silafī narrates from Abū l-Rijāl Fityān ibn Naṣrullāh al-Azdī that he said: 'The mother of my children [i.e. my wife] narrated to me that she saw Khadījah bint al-Faqīh Abī l-ʿAbbās al-Rāzī many times praying the whole night and not sleeping except when overcome by sleep.'[2]

The teachers' work was a sacrifice on the path of God, and they attended to their students' needs with the same care as a mother does her children. ʿUthmān ibn Ḥayyān (d. 105) says: 'We ate food with Umm al-Dardāʾ and we omitted to praise God. She said: O my children, do not omit to season your food with remembrance of God. Eating and praising God is better than eating and being silent.'[3] ʿAbd Rabbih ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿUmayr ibn Zaytūn reports that 'Umm al-Dardāʾ would write the wisdom that she taught me on my slate'[4] – we guess that he was then too young to have learnt to write himself. He also reports that she would say to him: 'Learn the wisdom when you are little [young], then you will implement it when you grow up.'[5] Sulaym ibn ʿĀmir says: 'I set out intending [a journey to] Jerusalem. I passed by [the home of] Umm al-Dardāʾ. She gave me [something] to drink and she gave me a dinar.'[6] This spirit of generosity, giving of their wealth as well as time, is a consistent and stable characteristic of the *muḥaddithāt*. Mūsā ibn ʿAbdillāh says: 'ʿĀʾishah bint Ṭalḥah narrated to us and said [that] the people used to come to [*umm al-muʾminīn* ʿĀʾishah] from every city. They would write letters from their cities. I would sit before ʿĀʾishah [and say]: *Khālah* [aunt], this is a letter from so-and-so and a gift from him. Then ʿĀʾishah would say to me: My child, answer him and reward him. If you do not have anything to reward [him with], I will give you [something]. Then she would give me [something for him].'[7]

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[1] *Ibid.* [2] ABŪ ṬĀHIR, *Muʿjam al-safar*, 83. [3] IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 433. [4] *Ibid.*, 428. [5] *Ibid.*, 433. [6] ABŪ ZURʿAH AL-DIMASHQĪ, *al-Taʾrīkh* i. 333. [7] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *al-Adab al-mufrad*, bāb *al-kitābah ilā l-nisāʾ wa jawābi-hinn.*

Some of the women were so engrossed in teaching that they devoted their whole day to it, holding extended sessions almost without rest. One *muḥaddithah* renowned for stamina through all-day sessions of teaching was Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ bint ʿUmar ibn al-Munajjā (d. 716).[1] She was popular in Damascus for teaching al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, then invited to Cairo where she taught it in the great mosque and other venues, her lessons being attended by notable men of the city, including its scholars. She lived beyond the age of ninety[2] and was still teaching on the last day of that long life.[3] Al-Dhahabī (a student) says of her: 'She was steadfast, patient for long sessions of teaching.'[4] The reason for such prolonged sessions was that students had often travelled great distances and wished to hear and read many ḥadīths in large compilations and in the shortest period. That needed exceptional endurance on the part of the teachers as, often, the students attended in large numbers. Al-Dhahabī says about another of his women teachers, Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (d. 740): 'She was devout, pious and generous, she narrated a lot of books. The students crowded round her, and read to her large books. She was of fine character, patient. Very often they would read to her most of the day, she was noble and kind.'[5] Ibn Rāfiʿ (d. 774) says about her: 'She taught big books, and she was easy in teaching, loved the people of ḥadīth, [and she was] kind and noble.'[6]

ʿAwn ibn ʿAbdillāh reports about Umm al-Dardāʾ that he once asked her: 'Have we wearied you? She said: You [pl.] weary me? I have sought worship in everything. I did not find anything more relieving to me than sitting with scholars and exchanging [knowledge] with them.'[7] Revising with students was necessary to establish the knowledge securely in their minds and hearts.

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kaminah*, ii. 129. [2]IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah*, *sub anno* 79. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, i. 292. [4]AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juzʾ al-mafqūd min Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 421. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kaminah*, ii. 117. [6]IBN RĀFIʿ, *al-Wafayāt*, i. 318. [7]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 355.

Al-Dhahabī says about his teacher, Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 704), that she was particularly good in revising.[1]

Sometimes, as a break from the serious work of studying ḥadīth, the *muḥaddithāt* would narrate interesting stories to relax their students. Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ al-Ḥamawīyyah (d. 720) used to do this.[2] There is precedent for it in the accounts we have of the Companions, who might sometimes joke with their students. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Aswad narrates: 'My father used to send me to ʿĀʾishah and [as a child] I used to go to her [i.e. beyond the curtain]. When I became adult, I came to her and called to her from behind the curtain: O *umm al-muʾminīn*, when does the bath becomes compulsory? She said: So, you have done it, O Lukaʿ! And [in answer to the question] when the private parts conjoin.'[3]

If the students erred, they would sometimes correct them with gentle admonition, sometimes with severity, according to the need. Yazīd ibn al-Aṣamm narrates: 'I and a nephew of hers welcomed ʿĀʾishah when she came [back] from Makkah. We had jumped into a garden of Madinah and picked its fruits. She was told about that. She turned to her nephew, rebuking him; then, she scolded me and said: Do you not know that God has brought you up in the house of his Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*? By God, Maymūnah has left [i.e. died] and now your rope has been thrown on your shoulder [so you are without a guardian and must guide yourself]. Listen! Among us she was among those most wary of God and most caring for her blood relatives.'[4] An example of appropriate severity is this response by Umm al-Dardāʾ to a serious failure of manners in one of her students. It is reported by Ibn Abī Zakariyyā al-Khuzāʿī: 'We went out on a journey with Umm al-Dardāʾ. Then a man joined our company. Umm al-Dardāʾ asked him: What is preventing you from reciting [the Qurʾān] and remembering God as your companions [are doing]? He said: I have [memorized] only one

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[1] Al-Dhahabī, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, i. 258. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 290. [3] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, v. 11. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 243–44.

sūrah of the Qur'ān, and I have repeated it so often that I have let it go. She said: Is the Qur'ān let go? I will not keep company with you – either you go ahead of us or come after us. The man mounted his camel and left.'[1] Ismā'īl ibn 'Ubaydillāh narrates: 'Umm al-Dardā' said to me: O Ismā'īl, how can one sleep if he has 10,000 under his pillow? Ismā'īl said to her: Rather, how can one sleep if he does not have 10,000 under his pillow! She said: *Subḥān al-lāh!* I see you will be tried (*tubtalā*) by [fortune in] this world.' And Ismā'īl was indeed tested by getting fortune in this world.[2] Zayd ibn Aslam narrates that 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwān, the caliph, once invited Umm al-Dardā' and she was a guest in his house. One night, he got up in the night and called his servant, who came a little late. 'Abd al-Malik cursed him. 'In the morning Umm al-Dardā' said to him: I heard you last night cursing your servant. I have heard Abū l-Dardā' say that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu 'alay-hi wa sallam* – said: The cursers will not be intercessors or witnesses on the Day of Resurrection.'[3]

Teaching unpaid; accepting small gifts

Most of the women taught without asking for or taking payment. However, they would accept from their students what they, unasked, could give as a gift. 'Uthmān ibn Ḥayyān reports from Umm al-Dardā' that she said: 'One of them will say "O God, provide for me". But he knows that God does not rain gold or silver over him. Rather, He provides people through each other. So whoever is given something he should accept [that]. If one is rich he should give to the needy, and if one is poor he should use that for his need.'[4] Ibrāhīm ibn Abī 'Ablah says: 'I saw Umm al-Dardā' in Jerusalem sitting among poor women. A man came and distributed some money among them. He gave Umm al-Dardā' a *fals* [a copper]. She said to her servant: Buy camel meat

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[1] IBN 'ASĀKIR, *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisā'*, 431. [2] *Ibid.*, xxxix. 452. [3] *Ibid.*, *Tarājim al-nisā'* 435. [4] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, iv. 279.

with it. She said: Is not that money *ṣadaqah*? Umm al-Dardā' said: It came to us unasked.'[1] The sources record many instances of *muḥaddithāt* who were needy, and when their students came to know of that, they would help them to the extent possible for them. Al-Sakhāwī says in his account of his teacher ʿĀʾishah bint al-Zayn (d. 880): 'She became very poor, so much so that she stayed in the *ribāṭ* of Umm al-Zaynī ibn Muzhir for a time, and she accepted a little from her students. About his teacher Sārah bint ʿUmar al-Ḥamawīyyah (d. 855), he says; 'She narrated a lot of ḥadīth; the imāms [of ḥadīth] heard from her; and [in terms of volume] I studied with her what is beyond description. She was righteous, with little wealth; that is why we used to help her. She was marked by intelligence, good taste, love of the students, patience in [her] teaching.'[2]

THE NUMBERS OF THEIR STUDENTS

Among the women scholars there were those who had a small number of students, and those who had a huge number. The huge number of narrators from *umm al-muʾminīn* ʿĀʾishah have already been mentioned. To illustrate the scale, from the later period, I have listed (see Table 2, below) the names of those of the students of Shuhdah bint Abī Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj al-Baghdādīyyah (d. 574)[3] who were, or who later became, famous as scholars, jurists, qāḍīs, and ascetics.[4] After that, to show how heavily attended some of the *muḥaddithāt*'s classes could be, I present a copy of, and then a transcription of the names of the students given on the attendance record (*samāʿ*) of a class, of which the most famous teacher out of 14 teachers was Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (d. 740). The class took place on 1st Rajab 718 in the Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī, Qāsyūn, Damascus. She was teaching *Juzʾ Intikhāb al-Ṭabarānī li ibni-hi Abī Dharr ʿalā ibn Fāris*, which

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[1]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 430. [2]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 52. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 571–580), 146. [4]Accounts of Shuhdah's students can be looked up *in loco* in AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *al-Takmilah li-wafayāt al-naqalah*.

she heard from Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim, who heard it from Yaḥyā al-Thaqafī, who narrated it from Abū ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥaddād, who narrated it from Abū Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī, who narrated it from its author, al-Ṭabarānī. Only a few women attended this class; their names are shown in italic.

Table 2. Famous students of Shuhdah bint Abī Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj al-Baghdādīyyah (d. 574)

Name of student (d., place) [other places associated with]	place(s) mainly associated with
Abū Ismāʿīl Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī al-Dimashqī (d. 614, Damascus)	Damascus
Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn al-Muẓaffar al-Baghdādī (d. 622, Mosul)	Mosul, Sinjar
Abū l-Maʿālī Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-Nahrawānī (d. 629, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Māristānī al-Ṣūfī (d. 639, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Muḥammad Ismāʿīl ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Azajī al-Māmūnī	
Abū Muḥammad Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAlī al-Jawharī (d. 631, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Shaykh Abū l-Faḍl Ilyās ibn Jāmiʿ al-Irbilī al-Shurūṭī (d. 601, Irbil)	Irbil
Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿUmar al-Mawṣilī (d. 622, Mosul)	Mosul, Irbil
Abū Ṭāhir al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣarṣarī (d. 633, Sarsar)	Baghdad, Sarsar
Abū Aḥmad Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥammāmī	
Abū l-Maʿālī Saʿīd ibn ʿAlī al-Baghdādī al-Wāʿiẓ	
Abū Muḥammad Ṭalḥah al-ʿAlthī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 593, al-ʿAlth)	al-ʿAlth
Abū Bakr ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭaḥḥān (d. 623, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbdullāh ibn Naṣrullāh al-Hāshimī (d. 622, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Fatḥ ʿAbdullāh ibn Abī Ghālib al-Sāmarrī (d. 636, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḍiyāʾ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Qurashī (d. 616, Cairo)	Cairo
Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Maḥfūẓ al-Ḥanbalī (d. 630, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Faraj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Najm al-Anṣārī (d. 634, Damascus)	Damascus
Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlī (d. 606, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Dulaf al-Baghdādī (d. 637,	Baghdad

Baghdad)	
Abū Ṭālib ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Qubbayṭī (d. 641, Baghdad)	Baghdad
al-Muwaffaq Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Laṭīf ibn Yūsuf al-Mawṣilī (d. 629, Baghdad)	Baghdad, Damascus,
Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Sukaynah (d. 602, Qanā, Egypt) [Aleppo, Jerusalem, Egypt]	Baghdad, Makkah Madinah
Abū Bakr ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAlī al-Baghdādī	
Abū l-Maʿālī ʿUbaydullāh ibn ʿAlī al-Naghūbī (d. 622, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Qāsim ʿUbaydullāh ibn al-Mubārak al-Azajī (d. 619, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Futūḥ ʿUthmān ibn Abī Naṣr al-Baghdādī al-Masʿūdī (d. 636, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn Afḍal al-Hāshimī (d. 625, Makkah)	Basrah
Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Tilmisānī al-Mālikī (d. 599, Said, Egypt)	Egypt
Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī-l-Faraj ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jawzī (d. 630, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Sulamī (d. 602, Hims) [Damascus]	Baghdad, Egypt
Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Nābit al-Azajī (d. 618, Rās al-ʿAyn)	Rās al-ʿAyn
Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Ibrāhīm al-Turkistānī al-Ṣūfī (d. 602, Shiraz) [al-Jazirah, Diyar Bakr, Khurasan]	Wasit, Hijaz
Abū Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Yūsuf ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Bundār al-Dimashqī (d. 600, Cairo)	Egypt, Damascus
Qayṣar ibn Kumushtkīn (d. 607, Tustar)	Baghdad
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Farghānī (d. 623, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Manāqib Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭāliqānī (d. 623, Damascus) [?Egypt]	Qazwin, Baghdad
Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Baghdādī	Baghdad
Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ṭāliqānī (d. 614, Rome) [Irbil]	Qazwin, Baghdad
Abū l-Maʿālī Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Jīlī al-Baghdādī (d. 627, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Mashshiq al-Baghdādī al-Bayyiʿ (d. 593)	Baghdad
Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Irbilī (d. 618, Irbil)	Irbil, ?Egypt
Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yūsufī (d. 640, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān al-Zabīdī (d. 608, Kaysh island)	Baghdad
Abū l-Barakāt Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Anṣārī (d. 600, Asyut)	Asyut, Mosul

Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Baghdādī al-Ḍarīr (d. 617)	Baghdad
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿImād al-Ḥarrānī (d. 632, Alexandria)	Harran, Alexandria
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Ẓafarī (d. 627, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿAbdillāh al-Nawqānī (d. 637, Cairo)	Nishapur, Cairo
Abū l-Saʿūd Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar al-Baṣrī (d. 629, Basrah)	Basrah
Abū Saʿd Muḥammad ibn Abī Muḥammad al-Nafīs al-Ḥanbalī (d. 604, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā al-Baghdādī (d. 639, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Ṣāliḥ Naṣr ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Jīlī (d. 633, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Futūḥ Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (d. 634, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Faḍāʾil Hibatullāh ibn Salāmah ibn al-Musallam al-Lakhamī al-Shāfiʿī (d. 607, Cairo)	Cairo
Abū l-Majd Yaḥyā ibn Abī-l-Wafāʾ al-Mārdīnī (d. 620, Mardin) [Damascus]	Mardin, Baghdad
Abū l-Makārim Yaʿīsh ibn Rayḥān ibn Mālik al-Anbārī (d. 622, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū l-Walīd Yūsuf ibn ʿUmar al-Bāqillānī (d. 625, Baghdad)	Baghdad
Abū Muḥammad Yūnus ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān (d. 630, Baghdad)	Baghdad

Continuation of *samāʿ* of the class of Zaynab bint al-Kamāl

Samāʿ of the class of Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (d. 740), teaching *Juzʾ Intikhāb al-Ṭabarānī li ibni-hi Abī Dharr ʿalā ibn Fāris* in Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī, Qāsyūn, Damascus, 1 Rajab 718. Continues on previous page.

The document shown on the previous page[1] begins by stating the title of the book taught; then follow the names of the 14 shaykhs and shaykhahs taking the class, including Zaynab bint al-Kamāl; their *isnād* to the author; the names of the students who attended the whole session; those who attended only a part of it; the place and date of the class.

Partial transcription of the *samā*ʿ of the class of Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (d. 740), teaching *Juz*ʾ *Intikhāb al-Ṭabarānī li ibni-hi Abī Dharr* ʿ*alā ibn Fāris* in Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī, Qāsyūn, Damascus, 1 Rajab 718. (The names of the few women students in this class are in italic.)

name of student (date of death if known; place associated with)
Muḥammad ibn Saʿd al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisī
Shaykh Muwaffaq al-Dīn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Ḥassān al-Farrāʾ
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Salmān al-Bālisī
Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Sayyidihim al-Iskandarī (d. 754; Alexandria)
Aḥmad ibn al-Shaykh Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Tammām ibn Ḥassān al-Ḥanbalī (d. 760; Damascus)
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Abī-l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Baqā al-Baghdādī (d. 759; Damascus)
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿIwaḍ al-Maqdisī
Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad ibn al-ʿIzz ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar
Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Mulaqqin
ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAyyāsh
Ismāʿīl ibn Sulṭān ibn Ghanāʾim al-Khabbāz the grandson of Naṣrullāh ibn ʿAyyāsh
Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAtīq al-Najm ibn ʿAbbās al-ʿAṭṭār
ʿAlī ibn al-Zayn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Mūsā
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abī-l-Ḥarām al-Sanbūsalī
Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Aṭbāqī al-Tājir

[1] MUṬʿĪ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmi*ʿ *al-Muẓaffarī*, 445–46. MS M105–Q239.

ʿAlī ibn Nāṣir ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Khabbāz al-Nassāj
ʿAbdullāh Aybak ʿAtīq ibn Sabʿ al-Majānīn
ʿUmar ibn Ḥamzah ibn Yūnus ibn Ḥamzah al-Irbilī al-ʿAdawī (d. 782; Safad)
ʿUmar ibn Saʿd ibn ʿAwsajah al-Maʿdhirī
Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin
Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Nāṣiḥ ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAyyāsh
Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Shaykh Abī ʿUmar
ʿUthmān ibn ʿAṭiyyah ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid
al-Sharīf Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muẓaffar al-Ḥusaynī (d. 776; Damascus)
ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Musallam al-Kattānī (d. 777; Damascus)
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Naṣrullāh ibn Ḥasan
ʿUmar ibn al-ʿImād ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUqbah
Muḥammad ibn al-ʿImād ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUqbah
Muḥammad ibn Fuḍayl ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin
Yaḥyā ibn Fuḍayl ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin
Ibrāhīm ibn Shibl ibn Ḥamdān al-Ḥammāl al-ʿAytī al-Sammān
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Turaykī
Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak al-Turaykī
Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad
Aḥmad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Jammaʿīlī
Muḥammad ibn Nāṣir ibn Manṣūr
ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥājj Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad al-Tannūrī
ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar ibn Shibl al-Fiqāʿī
Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Shibl al-Fiqāʿī
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlwān
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh, relative of al-Ṣāʾin al-Ḥanafī al-Turkmānī
ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-ʿIzz
Rāfiʿ ibn Rikāb ibn Rikāb al-Ṣarghānī
al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Salmān ibn Muḥammad al-Maʿmarī al-Nuʿmānī
Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
ʿAlī ibn al-ʿIzz
Zayn al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿUthmān ibn Sālim ibn Khalaf al-Maqdisī
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn

Kāmil al-Maqdisī
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Faqīr al-Ikhmīmī
ʿAbd al-Salām ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mutaʿayyish
Ḥusayn ibn Aqsh ibn Shardah al-Kurdī
Muḥammad ibn ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Khayyāṭ
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm
ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh
Muḥammad ibn al-Muḥibb ʿAbdillāh al-Maqdisī
his sister *Khadījah*
her mother *Dunyā bint Yamān ibn Masʿūd ibn Jān*
Muḥammad
Ibrāhīm
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
Zaynab, brothers and sister of Muḥibb ʿAbdullāh al-Maqdisī
Zaynab and Muḥammad descendants of their brother
their mother *Fāṭimah bint Muḥibb ibn al-Muḥibb*
al-Imām Amīn al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Wānī (d. 735; Damascus)
his son ʿAbdullāh
Bahāʾ al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Khalīl al-Makkī
Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn Yaʿqūb ibn Sayyidihim al-Iskandarī (d. 754; Damascus)
his children Muḥammad, Aḥmad and *ʿĀʾishah*
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Rushayq al-Miṣrī al-Mālikī
his daughter *ʿĀʾishah*
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Naṣrullāh ibn Abī-l-ʿIzz al-Zaynī
his son Muḥammad
ʿUmar and *Khadījah* descendants of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥāfiẓ Jamāl al-Dīn al-Mizzī
their aunt *Zaynab*
ʿAbdullāh Aybak ʿAtīq ibn Sabʿ al-Majānīn
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim ibn ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Maqdisī
Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān ibn Abī-l-Ḥasan al-Dayrqānūnī
Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Mannāʿ al-Tikrītī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Khaḍir al-Ṭaḥḥān
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin ibn Tāmir al-Khayyāṭ al-Dallī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣāliḥī
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qayyim al-Qaṭṭān
ʿUmar and Aḥmad sons of Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn

Ṭarkhān with their father
Muḥammad and Aḥmad sons of Shams al-Dīn ibn Ṭarkhān
their slave Aydmar
Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Salāmah al-Khayyāṭ
Raslān ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Muwaffaq Ismāʿīl al-Dhahabī (d. 796; Damascus)
Ibrāhīm ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Abī-l-ʿAbbās al-ʿAṭṭār
ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Niʿmah ibn Sālim al-Nābulsī
Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-ʿAlam ibn Maḥmūd ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥarrānī (d. 742; Damascus)
his children *Khadījah* and Muḥammad
their grandmother *Zaynab* bint ʿAlī ibn Isrāʾīl al-Kinānī
Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Imām Zayn al-Dīn Abī Bakr ibn Yūsuf ibn Abī Bakr al-Mizzī
ʿUthmān ibn al-Zayn ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad ibn Bayān
Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Mawṣilī al-Khabbāz
his daughter *Zāhidah*
ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Salmān al-Jammāʿīlī
his son ʿAbd al-Qādir
al-Ḥājj ʿUthmān ibn Khalaf ibn ʿĪsā al-Harāʾijī
his son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
al-Ṣārim Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar ibn Muslim al-Kinānī
his brother Ḥasan
their cousins Aḥmad and Muḥammad, sons of ʿUthmān
Salāmah ibn ʿĀmir ibn Najwān al-Fuzārī
Fayyāḍ ibn Fayyāḍ ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Funduqī
ʿAlī ibn Abī Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Ṣumādī
Aḥmad ibn al-Zayn ibn al-Shihāb al-Ḥalbūnī
Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Maʿarrī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Aḥmad sons of Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Baqā al-Mulaqqin
Muḥammad ibn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim
Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ghāzī ibn ʿAlī ibn Bashīr al-Turkmānī
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Mānīʿ al-Bayṭār
Abū l-Thanāʾ ibn Mūsā ibn ʿAbd al-Jalīl al-Furāwī
his son Muḥammad
ʿAbd al-Ghaffār ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Ghaffār
ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd

Abū Bakr and *ʿĀʾishah* children of Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Barakāt ibn Abī-l-Faḍl al-Baʿlabakkī
ʿAbdullāh ʿAtīq al-ʿIrāqī
Muḥammad and *Fāṭimah* children of Muḥammad ibn Shaddād ibn ʿUthmān al-Qaṭṭān
Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr ibn Sulaymān al-Warrāq
Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥajāwī
Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn al-Thiqah al-Warrāq
Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Muʿallim al-Shāghūrī al-Balkhī al-ʿAṭṭār
his son Muḥammad
Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Shihāb Aḥmad ibn Muḥsin al-Māwardī
his son Muḥammad
Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Murshidī
Zayn al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn al-Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn Marwān al-Fāriqī
ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar ibn Muʾmin
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar ibn Naṣr al-Ḥarrānī al-Nassāj
ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdān al-Daqqāq
Yūsuf and Khalīl sons of Ṣāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥāfiẓī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUthmān ibn al-Ṣafī ibn ʿUqbah
ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Mawṣilī al-Dhahabī
Muḥammad ibn al-Shaykh Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn al-Ṭanbā ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Ḥalabīyyah and his brothers
and Muḥammad ibn Ṭughrīl ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Ṣayrafī

HOW THE *MUḤADDITHĀT* TRANSMITTED ḤADĪTH

We saw in an earlier chapter that the women as students got ḥadīth and knowledge of the *Sunnah* through the same ways as men. This is also true of how, as teachers, they passed it on.

Narration of the words

The highest way of ḥadīth transmission is by the teacher's speaking the words to the student. It is important to emphasize this lest people should suppose that the women teaching ḥadīth were less particular, less scholarly, about wording or that, since they were women, they conveyed the words at some remove, so

that their students did not directly hear them speak. As always, the precedent is established during the generation of the Companions. I will begin therefore with examples where it is explicit that the students *heard* the ḥadīths spoken to them, because variants are recorded, or because the words as spoken are interpreted to clarify the meaning, or because someone's saying particular words is questioned in order to clarify and confirm it.

Nāfiʿ narrated from Ṣafiyyah bint Abī ʿUbayd that

She heard Ḥafṣah bint ʿUmar, the wife of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: 'It is not allowed for any woman who believes in God and the Last Day' or he said 'in God and His Messenger' – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – to be in mourning for a deceased for more than three days except for a husband.[1]

Nāfiʿ narrated from ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar that he said:

Ḥafṣah narrated to me, and this is about a time when no one would enter upon him [*ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*], that he used to pray two *rakʿah*s when the dawn broke. She meant [when] the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and the caller would call for the prayer.[2]

ʿAbdullāh ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Muzanī says:

Ḥafṣah bint ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb narrated to me saying: The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – once had a garment [placed] over his thighs. Abū Bakr sought permission [to enter], and he allowed him while in the same state. Then ʿUmar came with the same happening, then other Companions came, while he was in the same state.

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[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *wujūb al-iḥdād fī ʿiddat al-wafāh wa taḥrīmi-hi fī ghayri dhālik illā thalāthata ayyām*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bā*b ʿiddat al mutawaffā ʿan-hā zawju-hā*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *hal tuḥidd al-marʾah ʿalā ghayri zawji-hā*. [2] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *al-adhān baʿd al-fajr*, bāb *al-rakaʿatayn qabla l-ẓuhr*; bāb *al-taṭawwuʿ baʿda l-maktūbah*; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *istiḥbāb rakʿatay al-fajr wa-l-ḥathth ʿalay-himā*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *mā jāʾa anna-hu yuṣalli-himā fī l-bayt*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *waqt rakʿatay al-fajr wa dhikr al-ikhtilāf ʿalā nāfiʿ*; bāb *rakʿatay al-fajr*; bāb *tākhir al-maghrib*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, Ṣalāh, bāb *mā jāʾa fī al-rakʿatayn qabla l-fajr*.

Then ʿUthmān came, sought permission and he permitted him then he took his garment and put it on [fully]. They talked for a while then they left. I said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿAlī, and your other Companions came and you remained in your state [without changing it]. When ʿUthmān came you dressed [fully]. He said: Should I not be shy from one from whom the [very] angels would be shy?[1]

Sālim ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿUmar narrated from Abū l-Jarrāḥ that Umm Ḥabībah narrated to him saying:

I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: Had it not been a hardship to my community *(ummah)*, I would have commanded them to clean their teeth at the time of every prayer when they do *wuḍūʾ*.[2]

Zuhrī narrated from ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn that Ṣafiyyah, the wife of the Prophet, narrated to him:

I came to the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and spoke to him when he was in *iʿtikāf* in the mosque. He stood up with me and took me to my house. On the way, two people from the Anṣār met him. She says: When they saw the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – they felt shyness and stepped back. He said: Come forward; this is Ṣafiyyah, my wife. They said: We seek refuge in God, Glorified is He. He said – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*: I am not saying that you harboured a bad thought, but I know that the satan runs through the body like the blood.[3]

Qatādah narrates:

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[1] IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, musnad al-nisāʾ*. [2] *Ibid.* [3] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Iʿtikāf*, bāb *hal yakhruju al-muʾtakif li-hawāʾiji-hi ilā bāb al-masjid*; *Adab*, bāb *al-takbīr wa tasbīḥ ʿinda l-taʿajjub*; *Badʾ al-khalq*, bāb *ṣifat iblīs wa junūdi-h*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Istiʾdhān*, bāb *bayān anna-hu yustaḥabbu li-man ruʾiya khāliyan bi imraʾatin wa kānat zawjata-hu aw maḥraman an yaqūla hādhihī fulānatu li-yadfaʿa ẓann al-sūʾ bi-hi*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṣawm*, bāb *al-muʾtakif yadkhulu al-bayta li-ḥajati-hi*; *Adab*, bāb *min ḥusn al-ẓann*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṣiyām*, bāb *fī al-muʾtakif yazūru-hu ahlu-hu fī l-masjid*. ABŪ NUʿAYM AL-AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 168.

ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Nawfal narrated to me from ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās that Muʿāwiyah prayed *ʿaṣr* then Ibn al-Zubayr stood up and prayed after it. Muʿāwiyah said: 'O Ibn ʿAbbās, what are these two *rakʿah*s? [Ibn ʿAbbās] said: It is an innovation and its doer is an innovator. When Ibn al-Zubayr turned [to them] he said: What did you say? They said: We were speaking about this and that. Ibn al-Zubayr said: I did not do an innovation. Rather, my maternal aunt (*khālah*) ʿĀʾishah narrated [that] to me. Then Muʿāwiyah sent someone to ask ʿĀʾishah. She said: He is right; that is what Umm Salamah narrated to me. Then Muʿāwiyah sent someone to Umm Salamah [informing her] that ʿĀʾishah has narrated from you such-and-such. She said: She is right. One day the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – came and he prayed after the *ʿaṣr*. I stood up behind him and prayed. When he finished, he said: What is the matter with you? I said: I saw you, O Prophet of God, praying, so I prayed with you. He said, one of my *zakāh*-collectors came so I had been preoccupied [with him].[1]

Shaʿbī says:

Whenever Masrūq narrated from *umm al-muʾminīn* ʿĀʾishah, he would [begin by] say[ing]: 'Narrated to me the truthful woman, the daughter of the truthful man, the one declared innocent by God, the beloved of the beloved of God'.[2]

As for the Companions among the women other than the Prophet's wives, Kulayb said:

The step-daughter of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* –, whose name is Zaynab, narrated to me. I asked her: Tell me whether the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was from among [the descendants of] Muḍar? She said: Then who else was he from, other than Muḍar? He was from among the descendants of Naḍr ibn Kinānah.[3]

About the famous long ḥadīth about the Antichrist, one version of which is narrated by Fāṭimah bint Qays, Āmir al-

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[1]IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *fī man fātathu al-rakʿatān baʿda l-ẓuhr.* [2]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 64. [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *al-Taʾrīkh al-ṣaghīr*, i. 12.

Shaᶜbī says the following, noting minor variants in the different tellings of it that are known to him:

I met al-Muḥriz ibn Abī Hurayrah and I narrated to him the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah bint Qays. He said: I testify of my father [Abū Hurayrah] that he narrated to me as Fāṭimah bint Qays narrated to you. He said that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – said [the Anti-christ] is in the direction of the east.
Then I met Qāsim ibn Muḥammad and I mentioned to him the ḥadīth of Fāṭimah. He said I testify of ᶜĀʾishah that she narrated to me as Fāṭimah narrated to you, except that she said: 'both the sanctuaries of Makkah and Madinah are forbidden to him'.[1]

Sufyān ibn ᶜUyaynah narrated that:

ᶜUbaydullāh ibn Abī Yazīd narrated to us saying that his father told him saying: I became a guest of Umm Ayyūb, whose guest was the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam*. Then she narrated to me this ḥadīth that they made special food for the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – in which there were some of these vegetables [onions or garlic]. They brought the food to him. He did not like it and said to his Companions: Eat, for I am not like you. I fear lest I annoy my companion – meaning the angel [of the revelation, Gabriel].[2]

That precedent that we have just illustrated continued to be followed through all succeeding periods. The scholars heard the ḥadīths directly from their teachers, spoken by them. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, while listing the works that he studied with Khadījah bint Ibrāhīm al-Baᶜlabakkiyyah, notes: '...and the *Musnad* of Musaddad: if not by hearing, from al-Qāsim ibn Muẓaffar, with his *ijāzah* from ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz ibn Dulaf and Zuhrah bin Muḥammad ibn Ḥāḍir, with ᶜAbd al-ᶜAzīz's hearing it from Shuhdah.'[3] It is

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[1] IBN ḤANBAL, *Musnad, musnad al-nisāʾ*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan*, bāb *qiṣṣat al-jassāsah*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *K. al-malāḥim*, bāb *fī khabar al-jassāsah*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Sunan*, *Fitan*, *bāb (ḥadīth Tamīm al-Dārī)*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Fitan*, bāb *fitnat al-dajjāl*. [2] AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Sunan*, *Aṭᶜimah*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī al-rukhṣah fī l-thūm maṭbūkhan*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Aṭᶜimah*, bāb *akl al-thūm*; AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 331–32. [3] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaᶜ al-muʾassas*, i. 475–576.

clear here that ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz heard the *Musnad* of Musaddad directly from Shuhdah, one of its renowned narrators. Ibn Ḥajar has stated that Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Khayyir heard *Amālī Abī Bakr Aḥmad al-Najjād* from Shuhdah;[1] and that Naṣr ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Duluf, Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Badr ibn Fityān and Ibrāhīm ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Khayyir and others heard *Mashyakhah Shuhdah* from Shuhdah herself.[2]

Reading to the teacher

Next in rank, after hearing the text spoken by the shaykh or shaykhah themselves, is reading it to them. In later centuries, when there were more books and more copyists, this way gained in popularity. Ibn al-Jawzī says in the account of Karīmah al-Marwazziyah that imāms like al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn al-Muṭṭalib, al-Samʿānī, and Abū Ṭālib al-Zaynabī read to her.[3] Al-Samʿānī has stated that al-Khaṭīb read the whole of *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to Karīmah al-Marwaziyyah in five days.[4] Similarly Abū l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal ibn ʿĪsā ibn Shuʿayb al-Harawī read the *Juzʾ Bībā bint ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Harthamiyyah* with her.[5] Al-Dhahabī says in the account of Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ bint al-Munajjā: 'I read to her *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Musnad al-Shāfiʿī*.'[6] Muḥammad al-Wānī read to her *Thulāthiyyāt al-Bukhārī*, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* from *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, then the whole of the *Ṣaḥīḥ*, then the fifth part of *Fawāʾid* ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUmar ibn Naṣr al-Dimashqī, a *juzʾ* containing 12 ḥadīths from *Musnad al-Shāfiʿī*, three sections from the *Amālī* of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.[7] Similarly, readings to her were attended by Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī,[8] Abū Hurayrah ibn al-Dhahabī,[9] ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Majd al-Dimashqī,[10] Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn al-Munajjā al-

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[1]*Ibid.*, ii. 241. [2]*Ibid.*, i. 144–45. [3]IBN JAWZĪ, *al-Muntaẓam*, viii. 270. [4]See *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ* xviii. 277. [5]IBN AL-RUSHAYD AL-SABTĪ, *Milʾ al-ʿaybah*, v. 301–02. [6]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh* i. 292. [7]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ* ii. 173. [8]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 267. [9]*Ibid.*, ii. 145. [10]*Ibid.*, ii. 273.

Tanūkhiyyah,[12] Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Zaftāwī,[2] Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Nāṣiḥ al-Ḥanbalī,[3] Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad al-Ṣāmit,[4] Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar, ibn Muḥammad al-Shāfiʿī.[5] A very large number of people read to Zaynab bint al-Kamāl.[6] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the account of Fāṭimah bin Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī: 'I read to her many books and *ajzāʾ* in Ṣāliḥiyyah.'[7] Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī also read many books with her.[8]

Correspondence

Students also received ḥadīth from the *muḥaddithāt* by writing to them. An early example is scholars writing to Subayʿah al-Anṣāriyyah about her ḥadīth. ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī narrates that Masrūq and ʿAmr ibn ʿUtbah wrote to Subayʿah bint al-Ḥārith asking her about her case. She wrote back and explained the circumstances – that she had delivered at 25 days after the death of her husband, and with that ended her *ʿiddah*; then, Abū l-Sanābil ibn Baʿkak had come by and told her that she had rushed, that she should have waited for the later of the two dates, in this case the full four months and ten days of the known period of *ʿiddah*. She had become concerned that she had made a mistake: 'Then I came to the Prophet and I asked him to pray for my forgiveness. He said: Why is that? I told him. He said: If you find a suitable husband then marry him.'[9]

Correspondence with women for the purpose of establishing knowledge of their ḥadīth is well established in Islam. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-ʿAẓīm al-Mundhirī wrote to a large number of women scholars, whom he has mentioned in *al-Takmilah li-wafayāt al-nuqalah*. Another example is Sayyidah bint Mūsā al-Mārāniyyah (d. 695). She left Syria for Egypt and al-Dhahabī was unable to receive

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[1]*Ibid.*, ii. 389. [2]*Ibid.*, ii. 469. [3]*Ibid.*, ii. 594. [4]*Ibid.*, ii. 646. [5]*Ibid.*, ii. 651. [6]AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juzʾ al-mafqūd* min *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 546. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *Inbāʾ al-Ghumr*, iv. 314. [8]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd* , ii. 390–91. [9]IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, *b. inqiḍāʾ ʿiddati al-mutawaffā ʿanhā zawju-hā, wa ghayrhā bi waḍʿi al-ḥaml.*

ḥadīth directly from her. He much regretted missing the opportunity, and then he received her ḥadīth from her through correspondence.[1]

Ijāzah

I explained earlier that *ijāzah* was an accepted form of receiving and transmitting ḥadīth and knowledge of the *Sunnah*, and was very popular in the later centuries. The *muḥaddithāt* gave *ijāzah* both verbally and in writing. Below is an *ijāzah* from Sitt al-Katabah bint ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī al-Ṭarrāḥ:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أجزت لهم ما سألوه وكتبت ست الكتبة بنت علي بن يحيى بن علي الطراح

[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, i. 294.

The document requesting *ijāzah*, the *istidʿāʾ*, would often be circulated to different teachers, who would record their *ijāzah* on that document. Sometimes the *istidʿāʾ* is addressed to a single shaykh or shaykhah. In the document copy showing on the previous page, the request is from one Muḥammad ibn Khalaf ibn Rājiḥ for himself and his children, male and female and for their mother. The shaykhah responding writes: 'I have given *ijāzah* for what they have asked.' Then, following the word 'written' is her signature: 'Sitt al-Katabah bint ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī al-Ṭarrāḥ'.[1]

It was more typical, just as it was more practical, for the *istidʿāʾ* to be circulated to many from many. The teachers would then register the names of several people within the document, for whom the *ijāzah* was valid. At times such *ijāzah*s included a very long list of students' names. For example, the shaykhah Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bint Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-Maqdisiyyah (d. 720) gave *ijāzah* in an *istidʿāʾ*, written down in Damascus in 694, which names the following persons – the grouping of names, here indicated by a separating line not in the original, is of some interest – :

Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Sālim b. Rikāb b. Saʿd al-Anṣārī, his children Muḥammad, Zaynab and ʿĀʾishah, her mother Fāṭimah bint ʿUmar b. Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarīzī, their brothers Muḥammad and ʿAlī, their mother Mudallalah bint Abī Bakr b. Maʿālī b. al-Muḥabbar al-Shawbakī, her brother Muḥammad, daughters of her sister Hājir and ʿĀʾishah daughters of Yūsuf b. Ismāʿīl al-Baʿli al-Sammān, Abū Bakr, Muḥammad, Zāhidah and Nafīsah, children of Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Abī l-Fatḥ al-Ṭaḥāwī, their sister on their father's side Dunyā

ʿAlī and Sitt al-Riḍā, children of Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Adamī

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the great *muḥaddith* ʿAlam al-Dīn Abū l-Qāsim b. Bahāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Muḥammad al-Birzālī, his father's slave Bulbul b. ʿAbdullāh

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[1] MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah*, 103. MS Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyyah, 4565.

Muḥammad and Zāhidah, both children of ʿAlī b. Ibrāhīm al-Khabbāz, Muḥammad Aḥmad and Fāṭimah, children of Shāmah
Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUmar b. al-Ḥajj Yūsuf b. Ṭālib al-ʿIrbilī, his sisters Dayfah, Khadījah and Sitt al-Nasab: Khadījah's children Muḥammad, ʿAlī and Mulūk children of al-Ḥajj al-ʿIrbilī; Dayfah's children Muḥammad Sitt al-Jamiʿ and Āsiyah children of Muḥammad al-ʿIrbilī
Muḥammad and Fāṭimah children of Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī b. ʿAbdillāh al-Sirāj
Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muẓaffar b. Muḥammad al-Nabulsī
Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Khabbāz
Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Maqdisī al-Muʾadhdhin, her mother Nafīsah bint Ibrāhīm b. Sālim al-Anṣārī, her brother Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Yūsuf al-Mizzī
Aḥmad b. Qāḍī al-quḍāt Sharaf al-Dīn Ḥasan b. Sharaf al-Dīn Abī Bakr ʿAbdullāh b. Abī ʿUmar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Qudāmah al-Maqdisī
Muḥammad b. Ḥasan al-Māzdānī al-Khayyāṭ, his mother Āminah bint Aḥmad b. Naṣrullāh b. ʿUmar b. al-Rikāb al-Shāghūrī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Munajjā
ʿAlī and Abū Bakr sons of Salāḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Shahrazūrī
Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Qurashī
Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Barr b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn b. Razīn al-Ḥamāwī al-Shāfiʿī
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ismāʿīl b. Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Sharāʾiḥī
ʿUmar and Muḥammad sons of Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. al-Ḥasūb, their slave Masʿūd b. ʿAbdullāh, their aunts Zaynab and Khātūn daughters of al-Badr Ḥasan b. Balbān al-Salūqī
Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Quwayrah al-Ḥanafī al-Sulamī
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbdullāh, guardian Dār al-Ḥādīth al-Ẓāhiriyyah
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Anṣārī al-Zajjāj and his sisters living [at time of writing]
Marwān b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Marwān al-Najjār
Muḥammad b. ʿUmar b. Yūnus al-Najjār
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Yūnus, Muḥammad b. Īddīq b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, his sister Dayfah and her sisters living [at time of writing]

Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Jabbār
Aḥmad b. Dāwūd b. ʿAlī al-Dimashqī
Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh
Muḥammad and ʿAlī sons of ʿIzz al-Dīn Aybak b. ʿAbdullāh al-Rushaydī al-Ṣāliḥī
Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Tājir
ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Maʿtūq al-Shāfiʿī al-Muʾaddib b. al-Laḥḥām and his living children, Muḥammad, ʿAlī and Aḥmad children of ʿImād al-Dīn Aḥmad and their sisters living [at time of writing]
Muḥammad b. Ghāzī b. Muḥammad
Ḥasan b. Ibrāhīm al-Daqqāq
ʿAlī b. ʿUmar b. ʿUmar
Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. ʿĀmir al-Tadmurī
Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Mawṣilī, his sister on his mother's side
Muḥammad b. Aqūsh b. ʿAbdullāh al-Qabāqibī
Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Muḥaddith and his existing brothers, their cousin Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, his brothers and sisters living [at time of writing]
ʿAlī b. al-Shujāʿ ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm and his brother, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥīm b. ʿUmar al-Ḥalabī
Muḥammad b. Mujāhid b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaḥrāwī,
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṣaḥrāwī
Uzbik b. ʿAbdullāh slave of ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Ẓāhirī
Muḥammad, Aḥmad and ʿAlī, children of Dāwūd b. Khuzaymah al-Khabbāz
Muḥammad and ʿAlī sons of Yaqaẓān b. Ghazwān al-Daqqāq al-Samtī
Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Samtī al-Khabbāz
Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad
Aḥmad b. Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Daqqāq
Muḥammad and ʿAlī sons of Nāṣir b. Ṣāliḥ al-Shawī
Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. Sharaf al-Daqqāq
Mūsā and Muḥammad sons of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad
Muḥammad and ʿAlī sons of Mūsā al-Ḥumaydī
Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ḥumaydī
Abū Bakr b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Daqqāq
ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Ḥarbī, Yūsuf b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Tājir
Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Nassāj

Aḥmad b. Yūsuf b. Aḥmad al-Sammān
Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Maqdisī
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAlī al-Fāmī
Aḥmad b. Maʿtūq b. Aḥmad al-Ḥammāmī
ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Khayyāṭ
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿAṭṭār
Muḥammad b. Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al- Nassāj
Ibrāhīm b. Sharaf b. Yaʿqūb al-Dimashqī
Manṣūr b. Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān Fākhūrī
Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr b. Muḥammad al-Jāmūs
ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAlī al-Ṭaḥāwī
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qaṭṭān
Abū Bakr b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dimashqī
Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd b. Aḥmad al-Dimashqī
Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Mujīb b. Abī l-Futūḥ al-Ḥarīrī
ʿAlī b. Ḥasan b. ʿAbdullāh al-Jammāl
ʿUmar b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al- Nassāj
Aḥmad and Ḥasan sons of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Mawṣilī al-Jundī
ʿUmar b. ʿUthmān b. al-Shihāb Aḥmad al-Khashshāb
Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā b. Ibrāhīm al-Tayyāḥ
Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Muḥammad
Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad b. Thumālah b. Minhāl al-Muʿarbid
al-ʿIzz ʿUmar b. Ḥasan b. ʿAbdullāh b. Ḥabīb al-Tājir
Yūsuf b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Tammām al-Dimashqī al-Muʾadhdhin
Fakhr al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. Amīn al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Dimashqī, his sister Fāṭimah
Muḥammad and Naṣrullāh sons of Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAlī b. al-Qalānīsī, their sister Zāhidah
Muḥammad b. Badr al-Dīn Luʾluʾ b. ʿAbdullāh al-Mubārizī, his sister ʿĀʾishah
Imām Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Baʿlī, his children, Muḥammad and Aḥmad sons of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Abī l-Fatḥ
ʿUmar, ʿAlī and Fāṭimah, children of al-Ḥājj Aḥmad b. ʿUmar b. ʿUthmān al-Dimashqī al-Anṣārī
Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Muqrī
Fāṭimah bint al-Jamāl Yūsuf b. Yaʿqūb al-Ghumārī al-Mālikī, her sister on her mother's side Zaynab bint Sirāj b. Muḥammad b. Saʿūd al-

Mashʿarānī
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Muhandis, his sons ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and ʿAbdullāh
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and Khadījah children of Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Usāmah b. Kawkab al-Ṭāʾī al-Sawādī, their father
Muḥammad and Amat al-Raḥmān, children of Shaykh ʿAfīf al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Irbilī al-Shāfiʿī,
Muḥammad, Fāṭimah and Zaynab, children of Imām Jamāl al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. ʿAlī b. Shāwar al-Ḥimyarī al-ʿAdawī
Ḥasan and ʿAlī, sons of Shaykh Fatḥ al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Anṣārī b. al-Zamlakānī
Muḥammad b. Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad
Khadījah bint al-Raʾīs Jamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Naṣrullāh b. al-Qalānisī
Sulaymān b. Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Jamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Kāfī b. ʿAbd al-Malik b. ʿAbd al-Kāfī al-Shāfiʿī
Muḥammad b. ʿIzz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq b. Khalaf
Muḥammad b. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Ghālib al-Anṣārī
Muḥammad b. Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Anṣārī b. al-Baʿlabakkī
Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Tāj al-Dīn ʿAlī b. Abī Bakr al-Fākhūrī al-Raqqī
Muḥammad b. Sharaf al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Fuzārī
Ismāʿīl b. al-Qāḍī Najm al-Dīn Isḥāq b. Ismāʿīl qāḍī al-Raḥbah, Aḥmad, ʿAlī and their existing brothers children of ʿImād al-Dīn Ismāʿīl b. Ibrāhīm b. Salmān b. Ghānim
Muḥammad and ʿAbdullāh' sons of Abū Bakr b. al-Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad b. al-Qāḍī al-Fāḍil Abī ʿAlī
Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, ʿAbdullāh and Ismāʿīl, sons of Shaykh Majd al-Dīn Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Abī Bakr b. Ibrāhīm al-Jazarī and [...][1]

ASSEMBLIES FOR NARRATION AND TEACHING

The women organized their assemblies for teaching and narrating ḥadīth in their houses or the houses of others, in mosques,

[1] *Majmūʿah al-Ijāzāt*, MS in the Madrasah al-Ḍiyāʾiyyah, Qāsyūn.

madrasas and other places, like *ribāṭ*s (retreats) and orchards or gardens, wherever was easy and convenient for the purpose. I have not found any evidence that the Companions or the jurists and traditionists of later centuries put any hindrance in the way of women's teaching. To the contrary, their assemblies were well attended by jurists and great scholars.

Houses

Umm al-muʾminīn ʿĀʾishah taught in her own house, and in Basrah in the house of ʿAbdullāh ibn Khalaf where she was a guest of Ṣafiyyah bint al-Ḥārith ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Abī Ṭalḥah al-ʿAbdarī. Similarly, others among the wives of the Prophet, and the Companions taught in private houses. That tradition has continued until our day. Among the *muḥaddithāt* of the sixth century Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn taught at her home. Ibn ʿAṣākir attended her classes and narrated from her. Before citing the ḥadīth, he says: 'Umm Abīhā Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn narrated to us in her house while I was reading to her.'[1] Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī says: 'I heard the first, second and third [parts] from *Fawāʾid al-Ḥājj* with Umm al-Fakhr Jumūʿah bint Abī Saʿd Rajāʾ ibn Abī Naṣr al-Ḥusayn ibn Sālim al-Aṣbahāniyyah on Wednesday the 4th or 5th Ṣafar 599 at her house in Isfahan.'[2] Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad al-Birzālī says: 'I read the sixth part of *al-Fawāʾid al-Muntaqāh al-gharāʾib ʿan al-shuyūkh al-ʿAwālī al-maʿrūf bi-l-Mukhalliṣiyyāt*, with the righteous shaykhah Umm al-Fityān Ḥantamah bint al-Shaykh Abī l-Fatḥ al-Mufarrij ibn ʿAlī ibn Maslamah in her house in Damascus on Tuesday 18 Jumādā al-Ūlā 630.'[3] It is recorded in the account of Zaynab bint al-ʿAlam Aḥmad ibn Kāmil ibn ʿUmar al-Maqdisī (d. 687) that Ibn Rushayd received ḥadīth from her in her house in Qāsyūn

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[1] IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq, Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 297. [2] ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Thabat al-Masmūʿāt*, 160. [3] Ṣāliḥ ibn Ghālib AL-ʿAWJĪ, *Muqaddimah al-Fawāʾid al-muntaqāh al-gharāʾib ʿan al-shuyūkh al-ʿawālī* (M.A. thesis, University Umm al-Qura).

in 684.[1] Ibn Rushayd says in his account of Zaynab bint Muwaffaq al-Dīn ᶜAbd al-Laṭīf al-Lughawī: 'I read to her a *juzᵓ* from the *Ḥadīth Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Dīzīl al-Hamadhānī* in the house of Umm al-Faḍl in Cairo on Monday 29 Rajab 684.[2]

Hādīth ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb al-Kilābī was read to Zaynab bint ᶜAbdillāh ibn ᶜAbd al-Jabbār al-Maqdisīyyah at her house in Damascus on Thursday 23 Shaᶜbān 718.[3] *Faḍāᵓil al-Madīnah* of Abū Saᶜīd al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jundī al-Yamānī (d. 308) was read to Umm Aḥmad Khadījah bint Aḥmad ibn ᶜAbd al-Dāᵓim al-Maqdisī (d. 685) in her brother's house on Wednesday 12 Rabī l-Ākhir 683.[4] *Hādīth Ḥibatullāh al-Akfānī* was read to Zaynab bint Ismāᶜīl ibn al-Khabbāz in the house of Aḥmad ibn Saᶜīd ibn ᶜUmar al-Ṣūfī – one of the students – on Thursday 24 Jumādā al-Ākhirah 744.[5]

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[1] IBN AL-QĀḌĪ, *Durratu al-Ḥijāl*, i. 278. [2] IBN AL-RUSHAYD AL-SABTĪ, *Milᵓ al-ᶜaybah*, iii. 319. [3] LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-aamaᶜat al-Dimashqīyyah*, 95, 316. [4] Abū Saᶜīd al-Mufaḍḍal, *Faḍāᵓil al-Madīnah*, 55. [5] LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-samāᶜāt al-Dimashqīyyah*, 120, 312.

The document copied above is a *samāᶜ* for the book *Ḥadīth Luwayn.* It names the teacher as 'the Shaykhah, the righteous, the authentic (*al-aṣīlah*) Umm al-Faḍl Karīmah bint al-Amīn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Khaḍir al-Zubayriyyah. Then follows her *isnād* to the author of the book, the list of names of the men and women who attended, and the date and location of the class: Tuesday 17 Rabīᶜ al-Awwal, 629 'in her house in Damascus'.[1]

Mosques

The women also held their classes in the mosques. Umm al-Dardāʾ is well known for teaching in the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem. Her classes were attended by male and female jurists and traditionists as we noted earlier, even the caliph, ᶜAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān was a regular participant. Another example is of the righteous Shaykhah Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Jawhar al-Baᶜlabakkī al-Bāṭāʾiḥī (d. 711). Al-Dhahabī says in his account of her: 'She heard *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* from Ibn al-Zabīdī, *Saḥīḥ Muslim* from Abū l-Thanāʾ Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥaṣīrī, and also studied with Abū l-Qāsim ibn Rawāḥah. She lived a long life and narrated a lot.'[2] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn al-Qayyim studied ḥadīth with her.[3] Al-Dhahabī says: 'My son, al-Subkī, Sirāj al-Dīn ibn al-Kuwayk, al-Taqī ibn Abī l-Ḥasan and a great number [of others] studied ḥadīth with her.'[4] She taught ḥadīth in the mosque of the Prophet in Madinah. Ibn Rushayd says: 'She came in the Syrian caravan as visitor and pilgrim. I met her in the mosque of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – and ḥadīth were read to her while she was leaning on the side of the wall of the grave of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – in front of his head. She wrote *ijāzah* with her own hand for me and for others.'[5] There too Ibn Rushayd records

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[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-samāᶜāt al-Dimashqīyyah*, 402. MS 3803 fol. 35a. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Muᶜjam al-shuyūkh*, ii. 103. [3]AL-DĀWŪDĪ, *Ṭabaqāt al-mufassirīn*, ii. 91. [4]AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juzʾ al-mafqūd min Siyar aᶜlām al-nubalāʾ*, 394. [5]IBN AL-RUSHAYD AL-SABTĪ, *Milʾ al-ᶜaybah*, v. 21.

that he read some ḥadīths with Fāṭimah. It is not possible that Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad could have taught at a spot so revered by the whole community unless she enjoyed its respect and trust in the highest degree. How great an honour for her!

In Damascus the women used to teach in several mosques, like al-Jāmiᶜ al-Muẓaffarī (Jāmiᶜ al-Ḥanābilah) and Jāmiᶜ Banū Umayyah. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn Dimashqī says in his note on ᶜĀʾishah bint ᶜAbd al-Hādī (d. 816): 'She was appointed to the post of teacher of ḥadīth in the grand mosque of Banū Umayyah.'[1]

Schools

The women scholars also taught in the schools, where their classes where attended by both male and female students of ḥadīth. The records are plentiful and unambiguous about this. *Majlis al-Biṭāqah* of Abū l-Qāsim Ḥamzah ibn Muḥammad ibn ᶜAlī al-Kinānī (d. 357) was read to Zaynab bint al-Kamāl and Ḥabībah bint al-Zayn in al-Madrasah al-Ḍiyāʾiyyah on Thursday 28 Ṣafar 733.[2] *Ḥādīth* of *Bakr ibn Aḥmad al-Shīrāzī* was read to Zaynab bint Makkī al-Ḥarrānī in al-Madrasah al-Mismāriyyah in Damascus in 688 in a class of 19 students.[3] *K. al-Fitan* of Ḥanbal ibn Isḥāq al-Shaybānī (d. 273) was read to Sitt al-Ahl bin ᶜAlwān (d.703) in the Madrasat al-Ḥanābilah in Damascus on Saturday 16 Rabīᶜ l-Awwal 699 in a class of 16 students.[4] *Fawāʾid Abī Aḥmad al-Ḥākim* was read to ᶜĀʾishah bint Sayf al-Dīn Abī Bakr ibn Qawālījī on Tuesday, 4 Muḥarram 793, in al-Madrasah al-Khātūniyyah.[5]

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[1] *al-Intisār li-samāᶜ al-Ḥajjār* included in *Majmuᶜ fī-hi Rasāʾil* of al-Ḥāfiẓ IBN NAṢĪR AL-DĪN AL-DIMASHQĪ, 413. [2] *al-Samāᶜāt* recorded in *Majlis al-Biṭāqah min Amālī* Ḥamzah AL-KINĀNĪ. MS Dār al-Kutub al-Ẓāhiriyah, Damascus. [3] LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-samāᶜāt al-Dimashqīyyah*, 50. 215. [4] *Ibid.*, 103, 317. [5] *Mā ittaṣal ilay-nā min Fawāʾid* Abī Aḥmad al-Ḥakīm, 100.

Below is a copy of a legible, beautifully written *samāʿ* for a class on *Ḥadīth Abī l-Ḥusayn al-Kilābī.*[1] The teacher is 'the shaykhah, the righteous, the woman of high *isnād*, the long-lived' Umm Aḥmad Zaynab bint Makkī ibn ʿAlī ibn Kāmil al-Ḥarrānī.

[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqīyyah*, 463. MS 3818 fol. 171[a].

She was one of the teachers of al-Mizzī, of Ibn Taymiyyah, al-Dhahabī, al-Birzālī, and other famous scholars of that time. The document continues with her *isnād* to the author of the book, then lists the names of the men and women who attended. It says that the class included five sessions on *Amālī al-Jawharī*. The date given is: Friday, 10 Jumādā al-Ākhirah, 688; the venue: al-Madrasa al-Mismāriyyah in Damascus. The note in the margin names someone who had been omitted from the register, and another person has signed to verify the addition of that name.

Other places

The sources also record that women taught ḥadīth in *ribāṭ*s[1] and gardens. For example, *Ḥadīth of Abū ʿAmr ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Samarqandī* (d. 345) was read to Zaynab bint al-Kamāl in Ribāṭ Ibn al-Qalānisī in Qāsyūn on Tuesday, 1 Dhū l-Ḥijjah 743, in a class attended by 31 students.[2] *Juzʾ* of *Ḥanbal Ibn Isḥāq* was read to her in a *ribāṭ* in Damascus in 733 and attended by a large number of students.[3] *Ḥādīth of Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Shādhān* (d. 426) was read to Zaynab bint al-Khaṭīb Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ḥarastānī in Ribāṭ Baldaq in Damascus in 722.[4] *Karāmāt al-Awliyāʾ* of al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Khallāl was read to Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ al-Wāsiṭiyyah in a *ribāṭ* in Qāsyūn in 723.[5]

Musnad ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿUmar was read to the great shaykhah and famous *muḥaddithah* of Syria Karīmah bint ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Zubayriyyah (d. 641) in her garden in 639.[6] *Karāmāt al-Awliyāʾ* was read to Zaynab bint al-Kamāl in the garden of Amīn al-Dīn al-Wānī in the land of al-Arzah in 728.[7] *Ḥadīth Luwayn* of Abū

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[1]These *ribāṭ*s were retreats for study and religious reflection, usually located outside major cities; they should not be confused with frontier strongholds and fortresses for which the same name is used. [2]MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 110, 312. [3]See *samāʿāt* at the end of, *Juzʾ* ḤANBAL. [4]LEDER *et al.*, *Muʿjam al-samāʿāt al-Dimashqiyyah*, 60, 315. [5]*Ibid.*, 41, 319. [6]*Ibid.*, 69, 482. [7]*Ibid.*, 41, 311.

Jaᶜfar Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Miṣṣīṣī (d. 245) was read to Umm al-Faḍl bint al-Amīn ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb ibn ᶜAlī ibn al-Khaḍir al-Zubayriyyah. in the garden in al-Mayṭūr of Bayt Lahyā in 633. The copy, show on the next page, of the *samāᶜ* for this class records, in the usual way, the name of the shaykhah, her *isnād* to the book's author, and the names of the men and women who attended. It records also that, when asked, the shaykhah gave her *ijāzah* verbally to those who attended. The date and place are given as Wednesday, 19 Jumādā al-Ūlā, 633, 'in her garden in Mayṭūr in the land of Bayt Lahyā'.[1]

[1]LEDER *et al.*, *Muᶜjam al-samāᶜāt al-Dimashqīyyah*, 402. MS 3803 fol. 35[a].

Chapter 7

Women's ḥadīths and narrations

In this chapter, I present some of the Prophetic ḥadīths narrated by the women Companions, the number of them recorded in the Six Books, those narrated by women only, and then those ḥadīths of women that are relied upon in *fiqh*. Thereafter I discuss the women's role in the narration and diffusion of the major kinds of ḥadīth compilations. The chapter ends with a survey of works specialized in the narrations of women and some discussion of the interest of scholars in women's ḥadīths and narrations.

WOMEN'S ḤADĪTHS IN THE SIX BOOKS

The Six Books do not comprehend all Prophetic ḥadīths, nor all the men and women narrators of them. Nevertheless, these books have received a degree of acceptance no other works of ḥadīth have received, so it makes sense in this introductory work to focus on them. The women narrators whose ḥadīths are recorded in the Six Books are Companions, their Successors, then others to the end of the second century.

The dictionary of *muḥaddithāt* that I have compiled has accounts of about 2,000 women Companions; the ḥadīths of 130 are recorded in the Six Books. Some of them have only one or two ḥadīths and some hundreds. Imām al-Bukhārī has 31 Companions in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Muslim 36, Abū Dāwūd 75, al-Tirmidhī 46, al-Nasaʾī 65, and Ibn Mājah 60. The number of narrators among the Companions' Successors and others after them up to the second century is about 1200, of whom 130 get a place in the Six Books. The total number of women's ḥadīths in the Six Books is 2,764 ḥadīths, of which 2,539 are from Companions.

The matter of those ḥadīths varies as it does in the ḥadīths narrated by men. Some are common to both men and women narrators, some narrated exclusively by either men or women. A brief overview follows of women's ḥadīths under the different topics. This survey excludes ʿĀʾishah's ḥadīths, partly because they are well known, partly because some of them will come in the chapters on ḥadīth critique and *fiqh*. The ḥadīths narrated exclusively by women are discussed under a separate heading.

On *īmān* (faith), several well-known ḥadīths are narrated by women. An example was quoted earlier (see above, p. 147) from Suʿdā al-Murriyyah narrated by her son Yaḥyā ibn Ṭalḥah.

On *ṭahārah* (purification), women are sole narrators of the rites related to matters exclusive to women. However, they have also narrated much else on the topic. Particularly famous is the ḥadīth of al-Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh describing the Prophet's *wuḍūʾ*. Scholars travelled from far and wide to hear this ḥadīth from her. ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAqīl ibn Abī Ṭālib reports saying: "ʿAlī ibn Ḥusayn [Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn] sent me to al-Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh to ask her about the ablution of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. She described [it] in detail, then she said to him: Your cousin [ʿAbdullāh] Ibn ʿAbbās also came to me and asked me about the description of the ablution of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*."[1] Both ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, a Companion and cousin of the Prophet, renowned for his knowledge and *fiqh*, and ʿAlī Zayn al-ʿAbidīn, a great scholar among the Successors and the grandson of ʿAlī and Fāṭimah, referred to this woman for knowledge about the Prophet's *wuḍūʾ*.

On *ṣalāh* (the rite of prayer) women have narrated ḥadīths on different aspects of it. I mention here only a ḥadīth on prayer on the occasion of eclipse of the sun narrated by Hishām ibn

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[1] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *ṣifat wuḍūʾ al-nabī ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *mā jāʾa annahu yabdaʾu bi muʾakhkhar al-raʾs*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-rajul yastaʿīnu ʿalā wuḍūʾi-hi fa-yaṣubba ʿalay-hi*.

Urwah from his wife Fāṭimah, from her grandmother Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr: 'Once there was an eclipse of the sun in the time of the Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam.* I entered to [where] ʿĀʾishah [was praying] and said: Why are the people praying? She indicated with her head to the sky, and I said: Is it a sign? She [indicated]: Yes. [...]' Afterwards, she described the prayer in detail.[1]

On *janāzah* (funeral rites), there is a ḥadīth narrated by three generations of women – Umm ʿĪsā al-Jazzār from Umm Jaʿfar bint Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib, from her grandmother Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays:

I got up in the morning the day [my husband] Jaʿfar and his companions suffered. The Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – came to me. I had tanned forty hides and had made flour dough, and I had taken my sons, and washed their faces and oiled them. The Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – called on me and said: O Asmāʾ, where are the sons of Jaʿfar? I brought them to him, and he embraced them and smelled them, then he got tears in his eyes and wept. I said: O Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – perhaps some news has come to you about Jaʿfar? He said: Yes. He was slain today. She says: I stood up crying, and the women gathered to me. She says: The Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – started to say: O Asmāʾ, do not say any wrong thing, and do not beat your breast. She says: Then the Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – went until he called on his daughter Fāṭimah, and she was crying out: O uncle! The Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: On someone like Jaʿfar one who would weep should weep. Then he said: Make food for the family of Jaʿfar for they are preoccupied.[2]

On *ṣiyām* (fasting), there are a number of ḥadīths from women. Abū Ayyūb has narrated that on one Friday when the Prophet called on his wife Juwayriyah bint al-Ḥārith he found

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *man lam yatwaḍḍaʾ illā min al-ghashy al-muthqil;* MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣalāh*, bāb *ma ʿuriḍa ʿalā l-nabī ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam fī ṣalāt al-kusūf.* [2]IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *ma jāʾa fī l-ṭaʿām yubʿathu ilā ahl al-mayyit.*

her fasting: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said to her: Did you fast yesterday? She said: No. Then he said: Do you mean to fast tomorrow? She said: No. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Then break your fast.'[1] From this the scholars have derived that supererogatory fasting on the day of congregation alone, the day when people will be visiting and mixing with one another, is disapproved.

On *zakāh* and charity, there are many ḥadīths from the women. One enjoining charity is narrated by Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Ḍirār from his aunt ʿAmrah bint al-Ḥārith ibn Abī Ḍirār: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: For sure, the world is green and sweet. Whoever gets anything from it in a lawful way, he will be blessed therein. How many a one there is engaging unlawfully in the wealth of God and His Messenger! For him, there is the Fire.'[2]

On ḥajj: some of the ḥadīths narrated by women related to the rites of the pilgrimage were given earlier. Another example: from Manṣūr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān from his mother Ṣafiyyah bint Shaybah, from Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr: 'We left in the state of *iḥrām*. The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Whoever has *hady* [sacrificial animal] he should continue in *iḥrām*, and whoever does not have *hady*, he should come out of *iḥrām*. She says: I did not have *hady*, so I became *ḥalāl* [to my husband], and my husband Zubayr had *hady*, he did not become *ḥalāl* [to me ...]. She says: Then I put on my [nice] clothes and came out of *iḥrām*; then I came to Zubayr, so he said: Stand away from me. She says: I said [to him]: Are you afraid I will jump on you?!'[3]

Some examples of ḥadīths narrated by women related to food, clothing, business, *imārah* and jihād were given earlier. So also on *nikāḥ* and *ṭalāq* (marriage and divorce), and on this topic

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣawm*, bāb *ṣawm yawm al-jumūʿah*. [2]ABŪ NUʿAYM AṢBAHĀNĪ, *Maʿrifat al-ṣaḥābah*, v. 277. [3]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *mā yalzamu man ṭafa bi-l-bayt wa saʿā min al-baqāʾ ʿalā al-iḥrām wa tark al-taḥallul*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *mā yafʿalu man ahalla bi-l-ʿumrah wa ahdā*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Manāsik*, bāb *faskh al-ḥajj*.

others are discussed in the next chapter. On *mīrāth* (inheritance), there is the ḥadīth of Umm Saᶜd referred to by Dāwūd ibn al-Ḥusayn: 'I used to read the Qurʾān to Umm Saᶜd bint al-Rabīᶜ, and then she mentioned a ḥadīth related to inheritance.'[1]

On *fitan* (sing. *fitnah*; trials and tribulations, civil strife), there are several ḥadīths narrated by women Companions. Asmāʾ bint Yazīd al-Anṣārīyyah narrated the long ḥadīth of the Antichrist and the events leading to it; Fāṭimah bint Qays narrated the famous long ḥadīth of Tamīm al-Dārī containing the account of *Jassāsah* and the Antichrist.[2] And there is the ḥadīth from *umm al-muʾminīn* Ḥafṣah, narrated by ᶜAbdullāh ibn Ṣafwān, that she said: 'I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam* – say: An army will head towards this house [the Kaᶜbah] to invade it. When they reach Baydāʾ, the middle of the army will sink [into the earth] then the front part will cry out to the rear part. And none will be saved except the [one] survivor who brings news [of it].'[3]

There are a great many ḥadīths from the women on death, the punishment of the grave, and conditions of the Day of Judgment, the Garden and the Fire. Ibn Abī Mulaykah narrated from Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr that the Messenger of God said: 'I will be at the *ḥawḍ* (Pool) looking for those from among you coming to drink from it. Some people will be taken away from me. I will say: My Lord, they are from me and from my *ummah*. [The angel] will say: You do not know what they did after you; they continued turning back on their heels.'[4]

On the Hijrah, battles, supplications, good manners, and *ṭibb al-nabī*, the medicine of the Prophet, there are a number of narrations through women. So too, there are many on *shamāʾil*, his good qualities and appearance. On the virtues of the Com-

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[1] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Farāʾid*, bāb *naskh mīrāth al-ᶜaqd bi-mīrāth al-raḥīm*. [2] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan*, bāb *qiṣṣat al-jassāsah*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Malāḥim*, bāb *fī khabar al-jassāsah*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiᶜ*, *Fitan* (bāb not indicated by AL-TIRMIDHĪ); IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Fitan*, bāb *fitnat al-dajjāl*. [3] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Fitan*, bāb *al-khasf bi al-jaysh al-ladhī yaʾumm al-bayt*. [4] *Ibid.*, *Faḍāʾil*, bāb, *dhikr ḥawḍ al-nabī ṣalla l-lāhu ᶜalay-hi wa sallam*.

panions, Sudaysah narrates from Ḥafṣah that she said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: The devil never encountered ʿUmar after he embraced Islam but [that] he [the devil] fell on his face.'[1]

THE NARRATORS' ELOQUENCE

The qualities of eloquence in the women's narrations have been much remarked, namely narrative fluency, aptness of diction, pertinence and directness – neither ornamenting nor straying from the important matter – concision, and the ease in rhythm of speech that comes from understanding, even mastery, of details that are loaded with meaning for those who have the mind or heart to reflect. It is hardly possible to illustrate these qualities in detail at a remove from the original language, and I will not try to do so. However it is possible, even in translation, to get a sense of the more general elements of rhetorical skill.

Consider, for example, in the ḥadīth of Asmāʾ bint ʿUmays (cited in the previous section) about the day she receives news of her husband's death, the weight of emotion that is behind her mentioning that 'I got up in the morning the day Jaʿfar and his companions suffered.' Her stating this at all is a way of affirming that she did not complain that here was another day of anxious uncertainty. Instead she deliberately lists her routine labours of the day, before the Prophet came – her persevering, patient effort matching that of the men on the distant battlefield of Muʾtah. Her narrative (so affecting because in the form of direct speech) emphasizes two things: the tenderness with which the Prophet, being family and friend, feels and conveys the news, and his not neglecting, even at that moment, his duty to teach – in this instance to reform the excesses of the wailing of the Jāhiliyyah which indicates resentment and refusal of what God has caused to pass. In the later part of the narrative, we find the same balance: his feeling grief, and his allowing the kind of

[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *wujūb al-iḥdād fī ʿiddati al-wafāh wa taḥrīmih fī ghayr dhālik illā thalāthata ayyām.*

expression of it that is a true acceptance of what God has caused to pass, which he combines with teaching another reform of custom. On the basis of this ḥadīth, among practising Muslims ever since, entertaining those who come to share the grief of bereavement is not a responsibility of the bereaved family but of their friends. Asmāʾs ḥadīth also records how the Prophet's teaching is practised by himself, the reform promulgated by being implemented in his own family. Then, who would not be wiling to follow a man whose teaching them was an expression of his love for them, and vice versa?

As a second example, I cite below, a section of the ḥadīth of ʿĀʾishah about 'the slander' *(ifk)*. It is much too long to quote in its entirety. ʿĀʾishah was without doubt what we would now call a child prodigy. At the time of the incident itself she will have been in her middle teens. At the time she reports it, she is an established figure with very formidable powers of intellect and speech and well aware of her capacity, and her responsibility, to inform and guide the community. Her narration weaves together details of social, historical and legal import with her emotions at the time seen through her mature understanding of how, as a believer, she stands in relation to God and to His Messenger. The intensity of her feelings at the time is not diminished but, in her re-telling, those feelings are restrained by the realization that through this crisis she was led to a direct experience of her absolute need of God and dependence on Him. That is the meaning, when relief finally comes, of her explicit refusal to go to her husband, as her mother tells her to do: 'By God, I will not go to him. And I will not praise except God'

The parts of the ḥadīth not quoted below tell us much – when certain verses of the Qurʾān were revealed; the customs that had changed in the period between the incident and the telling of it; how the Anṣār, the Muslims local to Madinah, were not yet sufficiently united by Islam to overcome tribal and clan loyalties; how the slander was deliberately encouraged by a faction in Madinah. For that faction, Islam in Madinah was a political ascendancy that had to some degree displaced or diminished theirs, so their allegiance to Islam was nothing more than a waiting to see which way the wind would blow. However, the

true believers also listened to the slander and, not knowing what to do, were confounded by it and discussing it. Because so much anguish was imposed upon the Prophet himself and his household, the incident served to bring home to the believers the sheer destructiveness of slanderous gossip and the gravity of the sin of indulging in it. Only a few affirmed ʿĀʾishah's innocence; most remained uncommitted, perhaps because that is how they understood the Prophet's behaviour. But he could not have declared her innocent without feeding the malice of the slanderers – he knew before ʿĀʾishah did that in this crisis there was no help but from God. She reports with impeccable fairness what people said, without disguising her feelings about them at that time. Particularly touching is her report that her loving and loved husband asks after her during her illness in a coldly formal way, 'How is that [condition] of yours?'; also the moment when, after turning to her parents in the vain hope that they will say she is innocent, her indignation so overpowers her she forgets the name of the prophet Yaʿqūb and invents for him the *kunyah* 'Abū Yūsuf'.

The highest of the many virtues of this ḥadīth is its demonstration that the Revelation, the Qurʾān, was a grace from God only; it could not be called down because of any deserving or needing of it as human beings understand their deserving or being needy. The Book was, for its first audience, a connecting of the divine will directly with a real historical situation, made for ever exemplary by that connection. Yet, its authority and its sending down remained transcendent because both are from God. Only when the transcendence of God is perfectly understood is human prayer perfected; and human need when it has fully grasped that no help is possible except by grace of God is prayer. ʿĀʾishah's report of the *ifk* comprehends all those aspects of the believer's relationship to God and His Book. It shows that a heart filled with faith is not therefore empty of the concerns of this world; it is, instead, much better equipped to deal with them without losing either dignity or direction. ʿĀʾishah distinguishes with a fierce severity between God and His Messenger; it is God has saved her and Him she praises, none else.

She draws out, in the form of narrative and speech, the moment when she realizes for herself the absolute aloneness of each being before its Creator and its need to be reliant on His being all-just and all-merciful. That quality of reliance upon God is the source from which flow true human agency and dignity.

Where could this understanding have come, if not from God's Messenger, whose complete conveyance of the message is thus also affirmed by this ḥadīth?

ʿĀʾishah is the daughter of Abū Bakr, the first *khalīfah*. His faith was of a quality subtly different from that of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, who succeeded as the second *khalīfah*. Of ʿUmar it can rightly be said that if, after exercising reason and conscience and the wisdom he had got by experience, he reached a decision only to learn that the Prophet in a comparable case had decided otherwise, he *immediately* abandoned his way for the Prophet's way and adhered to it with full adherence; indeed, if need be, he would command others to adhere to it also. Of Abū Bakr, it can rightly be said that his faith was more supple in style, as if ready-conformed to the Prophet's way, so that the need to revise his decision seems never to have arisen. ʿĀʾishah's faith, despite her independence of mind and temperament, was between the two, perhaps a little closer to her father's style than ʿUmar's. When ʿUmar was assassinated it is she who, for his love of God's Messenger, consented to his request to be buried beside the Prophet, a place she had thought to reserve for herself.

Excluding the sections that I have alluded to summarily above, here is her ḥadīth:

[...] After we returned to Madinah, I became ill for a month. The people were spreading the fabricated sayings of the slanderers while I was unaware of anything of all that, but it raised my doubts during my illness that I was not seeing the same sweetness (*luṭf*) [of manner] from God's Messenger as I used to see from him when I became ill. He would only come, say *salām* and say, 'How is that [condition] of yours? (*kayfa tī-kum?*)' and leave. That raised my doubts, but I did not sense the evil till I went out while I was [still] weak from the illness. I went out with Umm Misṭaḥ [...]
[She] told me the slander of the people of *ifk*. So I heaped illness upon my illness, and when I reached my home, God's Messenger came to

me, and after greeting me, said: How is that [condition] of yours? I said to him: Do you allow me to go to my parents?' For I wanted to be sure about the news through them. God's Messenger allowed me [to go to my parents].

I said to my mother: Mother, what are the people talking about? She said: My daughter, make light of it. For, by God, there has hardly ever been a charming woman who loves her husband and is beloved of him and who has other wives but that they will do a lot against her.

[ʿĀʾishah] says: Then I said: *Subḥān al-lāh!* Are the people really talking in this way?

She says: I wept the whole night till dawn. My tears did not stop and my eyes did not know a particle of sleep. Then in the morning too, I continued weeping.

When the divine inspiration was delayed, God's Messenger called ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Usāmah ibn Zayd to ask and consult them about separating from his household [*sc.* his wife, ʿĀʾishah].

She says: As for Usāmah ibn Zayd, he said what he knew of the innocence of [the Prophet's] household, and what he had in his heart [of respect] for them. Usāmah said: It is your household and we do not know anything except good about them. As for ʿAlī [ibn Abī Ṭālib], he said: O God's Messenger! God does not constrain you – women other than her are abundant. Yet, ask the maid-servant who will tell you the truth. On that God's Messenger called Barīrah and said: O Barīrah! Did you ever see anything that aroused your suspicion? Barīrah said to him: By Him Who has sent you with the Truth, I have never seen anything in her that I would conceal except that she is a young girl who falls asleep, leaving her family's dough unattended so that the domestic goats come and eat it.

So, on that day, God's Messenger got up on the pulpit and complained about ʿAbdullāh ibn Ubayy before his Companions, saying: O Muslims! Who will relieve me of that man who has hurt me with his evil speaking about my household? By God, I know nothing except good about my household. And they have blamed a man about whom I know nothing except good. And he never entered my home except with me. Saʿd ibn Muʿādh, [one] of the Banū ʿAbd al-Ashhal got up and said: O God's Messenger! I will relieve you of him. If he is from the tribe of Aws, then I will cut off his head. And if he is from our brothers [i.e. the Khazraj], then command us, and we will carry out your command. On that, a man from the Khazraj got up [...] the two tribes of Aws

and Khazraj got so worked up that they were about to fight [even] while God's Messenger was standing on the pulpit. God's Messenger continued calming them till they became silent and so did he.
All that day I continued weeping, my tears never ceasing, and I did not get a grain of sleep. In the morning my parents were with me and I wept for two nights and a day with my tears never ceasing and I could never sleep, until I thought that the weeping would burst my liver. So, while my parents were sitting with me and I was crying, an Anṣārī woman asked me to grant her admittance. I allowed her to come in, and she sat down and started crying with me.
While we were in this state, God's Messenger came, greeted us and sat down. He had never sat with me since what was said about the matter was said. A month had passed and no divine inspiration came to him about my case. God's Messenger recited *tashābbud* when he sat down, and then said: *ʿAmma baʿd.* O ʿĀʾishah, I have been informed so-and-so about you. If you are innocent, then God will soon reveal your innocence, and if you have committed a sin, then repent to God and ask Him for forgiveness, for when a slave confesses his sins and asks God for forgiveness, God accepts his repentance.
When God's Messenger had finished his speaking, my tears ceased flowing completely so that I no longer felt a single teardrop flowing. I said to my father: Answer God's Messenger on my behalf as to what he has said. My father said: By God, I do not know what to say to God's Messenger. Then I said to my mother: Answer God's Messenger on my behalf as to what he has said. She said: By God, I do not know what to say to God's Messenger.
Although I was a young girl and had not read much of the Qurʾān, I said: By God! I know for sure that you heard this speech so that it has become planted in your hearts and you have taken it as a truth. Now if I tell you that I am innocent, you will not believe me. But if I admit a matter to you, and God knows that I am innocent of it, you will surely believe me. By God! I find no similitude for me and you except that of Abū Yūsuf [i.e. Yaʿqūb, *ʿalay-hi al-salām*] when he said: *Then [there is no recourse but] fitting patience! God it is Whose help is sought* [12. 18]. Then I turned to the other side and lay on my bed.
And God knew then that I was innocent and I hoped that God would reveal my innocence. But, by God, I never thought that God would reveal about my case divine inspiration that would be recited [forever] as I considered myself too unworthy to be talked of by God with

something of my concern. Rather, I hoped that God's Messenger might have a dream in which God would prove my innocence.
But, by God, God's Messenger did not move from his seat and none of the household moved, until it was sent down upon him. So there overtook him the same hard condition that used to overtake him. The sweat was dropping from his body like pearls though it was a wintry day and that was because of the weighty statement that was being revealed to him. When that state of God's Messenger was over, he got up smiling, and the first word he said was: O ʿĀʾishah! God has declared your innocence! Then my mother said to me: Get up and go to him. I said: By God, I will not go to him, and I will not praise except God, Great and Glorious is He.
So God revealed the ten verses *Surely those who spread the slander are a faction among you...* [24.11–20]. God revealed those verses to declare my innocence. [...][1]

FIQH DEPENDENT ON WOMEN'S ḤADĪTHS

As I mentioned, there are some ḥadīths that do not have any source, or any reliable source, other than women. A number of them have been the only basis for legal rulings. From the time of the Companions, jurists and scholars never hesitated to refer to women for the knowledge in their keeping. One example, which will be discussed more fully in Chapter 10, is the ḥadīth of Barīrah. She was a slave emancipated by ʿĀʾishah, the story of which provided many good points for discussions among jurists. The great Mālikī scholar Abū l-Ḥusayn ibn Zarqūn even compiled a book about it, called *Fiqh ḥadīth Barīrah.*[2] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī says: 'Some imāms have collected the useful points of this ḥadīth, which exceeded three hundred points. I have summarized this [discussion] in *Fatḥ al-bārī*.'[3]

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[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ, Maghāzī*, bāb *ḥadīth al-ifk*. [2]See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxii. 311. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥabah*, iv. 252.

The ḥadīth of Subayʿah al-Aslamiyyah

God has commanded in His Book that the waiting period for a widow, before she can re-marry, is four months and ten days; he has also commanded that for a pregnant widow the waiting period is until she delivers her child. Some jurists considered that four months ten days should be the minimum, even if a pregnant widow delivered before that. Subayʿah al-Aslamiyyah narrated that a few days after the death of her husband, she delivered her child, and asked the Prophet, who allowed her to re-marry. ʿUthmān, the third caliph, asked Subayʿah to confirm what she narrated and then judged according to her report. Sulaymān ibn Yasār has narrated that Abū Salamah ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās had gathered with Abū Hurayrah and were discussing the waiting period for a pregnant widow. Ibn ʿAbbās thought her waiting period is the longer of the two periods. Abū Salamah thought that the waiting period ends with the end of the pregnancy. They continued to disagree. Abū Hurayrah said: 'I am with my nephew [Abū Salamah]. Then they sent Kurayb, the *mawlā* of Ibn ʿAbbās, to Umm Salamah to ask her. She told them about the incident of Subayʿah al-Aslamiyyah and the Prophet's permitting her to re-marry after she had delivered her child.[1] Ibn ʿAwn narrated from Ibn Sīrīn that he said: 'I was sitting in Kufah in a big gathering of Anṣār. Among them was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Laylā. They mentioned the story of Subayʿah. I mentioned ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUtbah ibn Masʿūd's saying '[the waiting period] is until she delivers. Ibn Abī Laylā said: But his uncle [i.e. ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd) does not say that. I raised my voice and said, I would be foolhardy if I lied about ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUtbah who is [not far away] in another corner of Kufah.'[2] Imām al-Tirmidhī says after quoting Subayʿah's ḥadīth: 'The practice on this, according to the majority of the people of knowledge from among the Companions

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *inqiḍāʾ ʿiddat al-mutwaffā ʿanhā zawju-hā wa ghayri-hā bi-waḍʿ al-ḥaml.* [2]AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *ʿiddati l-ḥāmil al-mutawaffā ʿan-hā zawju-hā.*

of the Prophet and others, is that the pregnant woman when her husband dies, as soon as she delivers the child, it is allowed for her to [re-]marry. It is the opinion of Sufyān al-Thawrī, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] and Isḥāq [ibn Rāhawayh]. Some people of the knowledge from among the Companions and others say that her waiting period is the later of the two dates. But the first opinion is more correct.'[1] Imām al-Nawawī says about this ḥadīth in his commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: 'The majority of scholars from early and late generations have held to this ḥadīth.'

The ḥadīth of Busrah bint Ṣafwān

Zuhrī narrated from ʿAbdullāh ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ḥazm al-Anṣārī that he heard ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr say: 'Marwān, while he was governor of Madinah, mentioned that if a man touches his sexual organ, he must repeat his *wuḍūʾ*. I opposed Marwān and said it does not break the ablution. Marwān said: Busrah bint Ṣafwān has narrated to me that she heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: If one touches his sexual organ, he should do ablution. I went on disputing with Marwān until he called a man from among his guards and sent him to Busrah to ask her about her ḥadīth. Busrah's answer was the same as what Marwān had narrated to me from her.'[2] Imām al-Tirmidhī says after quoting Busrah's ḥadīth:

It is the opinion of a number of people from among the Companions of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and [their] Successors. It is the opinion of Imām Awzāʿī, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad [ibn Ḥanbal] and Isḥāq [ibn Rāhawayh]. Muḥammad [al-Bukhārī] says: The most sound thing on this subject is the ḥadīth of Busrah. Imām al-Shāfiʿī says: 'Busrah bint Ṣafwān narrated this ḥadīth in the city of Emigrants and Helpers and they were in big number, and no one opposed her.

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[1] AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī l- ḥāmil al-mutwaffā ʿanhā zawju-hā taḍaʿu.* [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-wuḍūʾ mim mass al-dhakar*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-wuḍūʾ min mass al-dhakar*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-wuḍūʾ min mass al-dhakar*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, bāb *al-wuḍūʾ min mass al-dhakar*.

Rather, it has come to our knowledge that some scholars after receiving her ḥadīth returned to it and gave fatwa according to it. Among them was ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr. He rejected [the opinion] that ablution can be affected by touching the organ. When he learnt Busrah's ḥadīth he left his opinion and ruled according to [that]. ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar heard her narrate this ḥadīth and after that he continued, until he died, doing ablution after touching. And this [agreeing to differ on details] is the way of the people of jurisprudence and knowledge.'[1]

The ḥadīth of Umm ʿAṭiyyah

This ḥadīth about the washing of the deceased[2] is considered to be the principal source on the topic. It became very famous. Bukhārī mentions or cites it many times in his *Saḥīḥ*, deriving many rulings from it. When Umm ʿAṭiyyah moved to Basrah and settled there, a group from among the Companions and Successors heard this ḥadīth on how to wash the dead from her.[3] Qatādah has narrated that Ibn Sīrīn learnt washing the dead from Umm ʿAṭiyyah,[4] and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr records that 'Ibn Sīrīn, among all the Successors, was the most knowledgeable about washing the dead.[5] Imām al-Tirmidhī says after quoting the ḥadīth: 'Umm ʿAṭiyyah's ḥadīth is a sound and good ḥadīth, and the practice is upon it according to the people of knowledge.'[6] Ibn al-Mundhir says: 'Among the ḥadīths of washing there is nothing higher than the ḥadīth of Umm ʿAṭiyyah, and the imams have relied on it.'[7]

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[1]AL-BAYHAQĪ, *Maʿrifat al-sunan wa al-āthār*, i. 255. [2]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *ghasl al-mayyit wa wuḍūʾihi bi-almāʾ wa al-sidr*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *ghasl al-mayyit*; ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *kayfa ghasl al-mayyit*; AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī ghasl al-mayyit*; AL-NASAʾĪ, *Mujtabā*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *ghasl al-mayyit bi al-māʾ wa al-sidr*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī ghasl al-mayyit*. [3]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 316. [4]ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *kayfa ghasl al-mayyit*. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, iii. 163. [6]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *mā jāʾa fī ghasl al-mayyit*. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, iii. 164.

ʿĀʾishah's ḥadīth about the wife of Rifāʿah al-Quraẓī

According to the Qur'an if a woman has been divorced three times (i.e. divorced irrevocably) by her husband, she cannot be remarried to him unless she marries someone else. ʿĀʾishah narrated that the divorced wife of Rifāʿah al-Quraẓī married another man, then wanted to go back to Rifāʿah. The Prophet said that she could not do so unless she had had relations with her present husband.[1] That condition – that the later marriage must be consummated – is not mentioned in the Qurʾān but, on the basis of this ḥadīth, is generally accepted by the jurists and scholars. Imām al-Tirmidhī says: ' ʿĀʾishah's ḥadīth is good and sound, and the practice, [according] to all the people of knowledge from among the Companions of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and others, is on this', and then he clarifies the condition about consummation.[2]

WOMEN'S NARRATION OF DIFFERENT KINDS OF ḤADĪTH COMPILATIONS

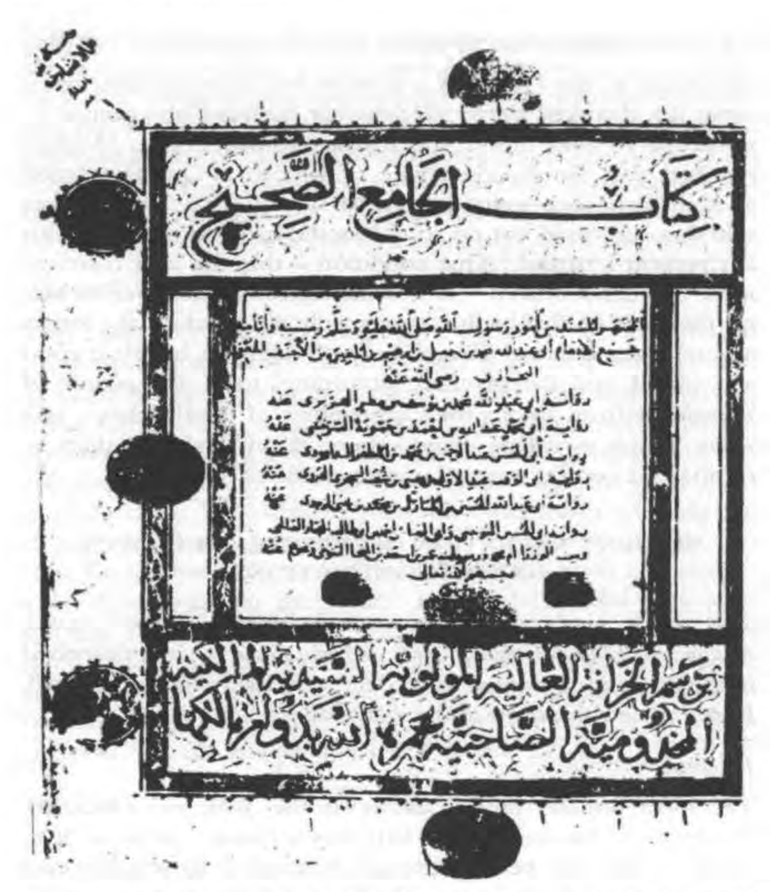
The major kinds of ḥadīth compilations – *jawāmiʿ*, *sunan*, *masānīd, maʿājim, arbaʿīnāt, ajzāʾ and musalsalāt* – were described in the account of women as students and their reading material. Here I review their role in the diffusion of these books.

Jawāmiʿ

The most popular of the *jawāmiʿ* is the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī. Karīmah al-Marwaziyyah (d. 461) was a famous narrator of it, whose version has been continually handed on by scholars ever since. Among those who studied the *Ṣaḥīḥ* with her was the renowned traditionist and historian al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.[3]

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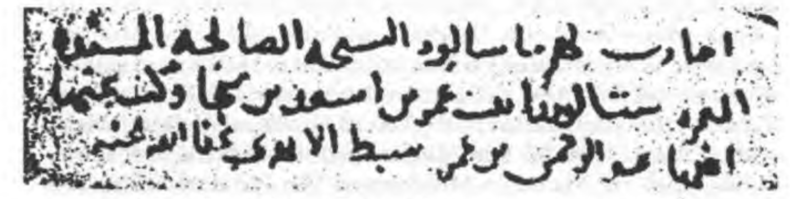
[1]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṭalāq*, bāb *man jawwaza al-ṭalāq al-thalāth.* [2]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Nikāḥ*, bāb *fī man yuṭalliqu imraʾata-hu thalāthan fa yatzawaju-hā ākhar fa yuṭalliqu-hā qabla an yadkhula bi-hā.* [3]See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 277.



Ornamented title page of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* written in the hand of Ḥāfiẓ Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Nūwayrī (d. 733). Under the main title it is stated that this is the narration of al-Firabrī, and then follows the *isnād* of Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ to him.[1]

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[1] IBN AZZŪZ, *Juhūd al-marʾah al-Dimashqiyyah fī riwāyat ḥadīth sharīf*, 275. MS, Maktabah al-Wazīr Kubrilī, no. 362.



Ijāzah from Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ to narrate her ḥadīth[1]

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar narrated Karīmah's version from his shaykh ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar al-Hindī al-Ḥallāwī, who studied it with Muḥammad ibn Ghālī ibn Najm al-Dimyāṭī, who studied it with al-Muʿīn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf al-Dimashqī, who studied it with Abū l-Qāsim al-Būṣīrī, with his well known *isnād* to Karīmah.[2] Ibn Ḥajar also studied it with his shaykh, Ḥāfiẓ Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī, who studied it with Abū ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbdillāh, with his *isnād* to Karīmah.[3] The famous narrator of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of the sixth century is Umm al-Bahāʾ Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad al-Baghdādī (d. 539). Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the account of Aḥmad ibn Khalīl ibn Kaykaldī al-ʿAlāʾī: 'Among his eminent narrations is the *Saḥīḥ*, which he studied with Ghānim ibn Aḥmad al-Julūdī, who narrated it from Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad al-Baghdādī.'[4] Another and equally famous narrator of the *Ṣaḥīḥ* is the righteous shaykhah and *musnidah* of her time Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ bint ʿUmar ibn Saʿd ibn al-Munajjā al-Tanūkhiyyah (d. 716) who taught the whole book many times in Damascus and Egypt. Among her students were: the qāḍī of Madinah ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Raziīn al-Ḥamawī, Shaykh Shams al-Dīn Muhammad ibn Aḥmad al-Jaʿfarī, Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Thanāʾ al-Hirmās al-Miṣrī, ʿImād al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Qurashī al-Isnāʾī, Shaykh Kamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Dahrūṭī, Muḥammad ibn Khalīl ibn Yarbak al-

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[1] IBN AZZŪZ, *Juhūd al-marʾah al-Dimashqiyyah fī riwāyat ḥadīth sharīf*, 276. MS, al-Maktabah al-Ẓāhiriyyah Damascus, no. 357 Ḥadīth. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 77. [3] *Ibid.*, 227. [4] *Ibid.*, i. 354–55.

Nābulsī, Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Ẓāfir al-Barlasī, Qāḍī Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Miṣrī, Abū l-Baqā Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Subkī al-Shāfiʿī, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Hāshimī al-Āmidī, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUmar al-Khalīli al-Dari, Taqī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Ḥalabī l-Miṣrī, qāḍī of Hims Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Subkī, qāḍī of Madinah Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muʿṭī, Ibn Khashshāb al-Miṣrī, Muhammad ibn ʿAlī al-Saʿdī al-Miṣrī, Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Miṣrī al-Shāfiʿī, Ibn Qāḍī Shubhah, Muḥammad ibn al-Sirāj ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Fāriqī, Ibn Abī l-Majd al-Dimashqī and others.[1]

The last woman who narrated *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with very high *isnād* was ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Maqdisiyyah.[2] Many famous scholars like Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī and Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī studied the whole book from her.

Saḥīḥ Muslim has also been widely taught by the *muḥaddithāt*. Umm al-Khayr Fāṭimah bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Muẓaffar ibn Ḥasan ibn Zaʿbal al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 532) of Nishapur was a famous teacher of this book. Another popular teacher of it was Zaynab bint ʿUmar ibn Kindī (d. 699). Muḥammad ibn Qawālīj, a teacher of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī studied the whole of it with her. She narrated it from al-Muʾayyad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ṭūsī, who narrated it from Faqīh al-Ḥaram Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Furāwī, from Abū l-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ghāfir ibn Ḥusayn al-Fārisī, from Abū Aḥmad Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn ʿAmrūyah al-Julūdī, from Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Sufyān, from its author Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj. (It is characteristic of the meticulousness of the scholars in this discipline that it is recorded that the Ibrāhīm

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[1] *Ibid.*, i. 354-5, ii. 230, 279-280; TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, i. 50, 113, 115, 119, 122–23, 149, 146, 151, 153, 162, 164–65, 183–84, 195, 199, 203, 209. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 351.

last mentioned did not hear some parts of three of the books in Muslim's compilation from Muslim himself, namely *Ḥajj*, *Waṣāyā* and *Imārah*.[1] Among the teachers of the book in the eighth century was Ṣafiyyah bint Aḥmad ibn Qudāmah (d. 714) and in the ninth, ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī (d. 816), who narrated it with full hearing from Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥasan, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, from Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ḥarrānī.[2]

One of the famous teachers of *Jāmiʿ* of al-Tirmidhī was Khadījah bint ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Ghashm ibn Muḥammad al-Mardāwī (d.734). Before her Zaynab bint Makkī taught this book several times. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the account of his teacher Aḥmad ibn Ṣaliḥ ibn al-Ḥasan al-Iskandarānī: 'He heard *Jāmiʿ al-Tirmidhī* in [his] old age from al-ʿUrḍī, who heard it from Zaynab bint Makkī.'[3] Al-Tirmidhī's *Shamāʾil* was also popular among women. Zaynab bint al-Kamāl narrated it from ʿAjībah bint Abī Bakr al-Bāqdāriyyah, who narrated it from al-Qāsim ibn al-Faḍl ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid and Rajāʾ ibn Hamid ibn Rajāʾ al-Maʿdānī, both narrated it from Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Khuzāʿī, who narrating from al-Haytham ibn Kulayb, who narrated it from its author, Imām al-Tirmidhī.[4]

Sunan

The version of Imām Mālik's *Muwaṭṭaʾ* most popular among Mālikīs and others has been that of Yaḥyā ibn Yaḥyā al-Laythī. Women have narrated this and the less popular versions. For example, Shuhdah (d. 574) transmitted the version of al-Qaʿnabī. Al-Dhahabī says in his account of Imām Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Dulaf (d. 637): He heard *Muwaṭṭaʾ* of Mālik, version of al-Qaʿnabī, from Shuhdah.[5] The version of Suwayd ibn Saʿīd seems to have enjoyed more popularity among the *muḥaddithāt*. For example, Zaynab bint al-Kamāl narrated it from Ḍawʾ al-

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 27–29. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 350. [3]*Ibid*, i. 369. [4]*Ibid*, ii. 14–18. [5]See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 45.

Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah, who heard the whole of it from Abū l-Ḥusayn ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq ibn ʿAbd al-Khāliq ibn Yūsuf, from Abū Saʿd Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Asadī with his *sanad*. Then it was read to Zaynab bint al-Kamāl in 726 in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in Qāsyūn.[1]

ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah narrated *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd from al-Ḥasan ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Rustamī, who narrated from Abū ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Tustarī and Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Shukrawayh, both heard it from Qāḍī Abū ʿUmar al-Hāshimī, who heard it from Abū ʿAlī al-Luʾluʾī, who narrated it from Abū Dāwūd.[2] Taqī al-Dīn al-Fāsī says in the account of Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAshāʾir al-Ḥalabī: He studied some part of *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd with Fāṭimah bint al-Malik al-Muḥsin Aḥmad ibn al-Sulṭān Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb.[3] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read a part of this *Sunan* with Maryam bint Aḥmad al-Asadiyyah, who heard it from al-Dabūsī, who narrated it from Ibn al-Muqayyar, who narrated it from al-Faḍl ibn Sahl al-Isfrāyīnī, who narrated it from al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, who narrated it from Abū ʿUmar al-Qāsim ibn Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Hāshimī, who narrated from Abū ʿAlī Muhammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAmr al-Luʾluʾī, who narrated it from Abū Dāwūd.[4] A particularly famous narrator of *Sunan Abū Dāwūd* is Zaynab bint al-Kamāl.[5] Many scholars up to the present have been narrating it through Zaynab's chain of narration.

Zaynab bint al-Kamāl also narrated the bigger version of *Sunan* al-Nasaʾī.[6] The smaller *Sunan* of al-Nasaʾī was taught by Āminah bint Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Wāsiṭī,[7] with the *isnād* of al-Qubbayṭī from Abū Zurʿah Ṭāhir ibn Muhammad ibn Ṭāhir, who heard it from al-Dūnī, who heard it from Abū Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Kassār, who narrated it from Abū Bakr

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[1]See MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī*, 591. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 322–23. [3]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, i. 97. [4]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 29. [5]Id., *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, 479–80. [6]*Ibid.*, 479–80. [7]*Ibid.*, i. 230–31.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Sunnī, who narrated from al-Nasaʾī.[1]

Sitt al-Fuqahāʾ bint Ibrāhīm al-Wāsiṭiyyah (d. 726) narrated *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah.[2] Imām al-Dhahabī says: 'She narrated an abundance of ḥadīths, and the students heard from her *Sunan* of Ibn Mājah and other things.'[3] al-Dhahabī also says: 'I read to her for my son ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.'[4]

Sunan of al-Dārimī has higher *isnād*s than even al-Bukhārī. Some scholars included it in the Six Books in place of Ibn Mājah, and it was very popular among the *muḥaddithāt*. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn narrated the *Thulāthiyyāt* of Imām al-Dārimī from Umm ʿAbdullāh Zaynab bint Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAbdillāh ibn ʿAbd al-Halīm ibn Taymiyyah al-Ḥarrānī, who narrated it from Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭālib al-Ḥajjār who narrated it from Abū l-Munajjā with its well known *sanad*.[5] Abū Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Qazwīnī says: 'I read the whole *Sunan al-Dārimī* with Sitt al-Mulūk Fāṭimah bint Abī Naṣr ibn Abī l-Badr in Rajab 707 in Bāb al-Marātib, east of Baghdad, who heard all of it with Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Masʿūd ibn Bahrūz al-Ṭabīb al-Māristānī in Dhī l-Qaʿdah 636, who heard it in Shaʿbān 553, in Jāmiʿ al-Manṣūr with Abū l-Waqt ʿAbd al-Awwal ibn ʿĪsā al-Harawī, who heard it in Jumādā al-Ākhirah 464 from Abū l-Ḥasan al-Dāwūdī, who studied it in Ṣafar 381 with Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, who studied it with Abū ʿImrān ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar al-Samarqandī, who studied it from its author Imām al-Dārimī.[6]

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar studied part of *Sunan al-Dāraquṭnī* with ʿĀʾishah bint al-Najm Abī Bakr al-Bālisīyyah.[7] Sitt al-ʿArab bint Muḥammad ibn al-Bukhārī (d. 767) narrated *al-Sunan al-kabīr* of al-Bayhaqī.[8]

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[1]*Ibid.*, 104–05. [2]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 375–76. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juzʾ al-mafqūd min Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 492. [4]*Ibid.* [5]See *Majmūʿ fī-hi Rasāʾil li-l-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī*, 286. [6]Sirāj al-Dīn AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *al-Mashyakhah*, MS fol. 45. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 358. [8]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 375.

Masānīd

Zaynab bint al-Kamāl narrated *Musnad Abū Ḥanīfah* (in the version of Abū Muhmmad ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Ḥārithī) from , who narrated it from Abū l-Khayr Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿUmar al-Bāghbān, who narrated it from Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Mandah, who narrated it from his father.[1]

Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ bint ʿUmar al-Tanūkhiyyah and Zaynab bint Sulaymān al-Isʿardī narrated *Musnad Imām al-Shāfiʿī* with full hearing from Ibn al-Zabīdī, who narrated it from Abū Zurʿah.[2] ʿAjībah narrated *Musnad al-Ḥumaydī.* Abū Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Qazwīnī says: 'I studied *Musnad al-Ḥumaydī* with Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Miṣrī al-Azajī, who narrated it from ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah with her *sanad* to al-Ḥumaydī.'[3] Shuhdah narrated *Musnad Musaddad.* Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read it with Khadījah bint Ibrāhīm al-Baʿlbakkiyyah who narrated it from al-Qāsim ibn Muẓaffar, who narrated it from ʿAbd ʿAzīz ibn Dulaf, who heard it from Shuhdah, who narrated it from Thābit ibn Bundār, who narrated it from Qāḍī Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Wāsiṭī, who narrated it from Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān al-Wāsiṭī, who narrated it from Abū Khalīfah.[4]

Zaynab bint Makkī was a famous teacher of *Musnad Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.* She narrated it with full hearing from Abū ʿAlī Ḥanbal ibn ʿAbdillāh, who heard it from Abū l-Qāsim Ḥibatullāh ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Shaybānī, who heard it from Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Mudhhib al-Baghdādī, who heard it from Abū Bakr al-Qaṭīʿī, who heard it from ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad, who heard it with his father, the author, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.[5]

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[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 482–83. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 555–56. [3] AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *al-Mashaykhah*, MS. fol. 44. [4] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 475–76. [5] See *al-Maṣʿad al-Aḥmad fī khatm Musnad Aḥmad* at the beginning of *al-Musnad.*

Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Sayyid al-Nās read *Musnad ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd* with Umm Muḥammad Zaynab bint Aḥmad ibn Shukr al-Maqdisiyyah who studied it with Abū l-Munajjā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar al-Lattī, who studied it with Abū l-Waqt al-Sijzī, who studied it with ʿAbū l-Ḥasan al-Dāwūdī, who studied it with Abū Muhammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥammūyah, who studied it with Ibrāhīm ibn Khuzaym al-Shāshī, who studied it with ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd.[1]

Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr (d. 600) narrated *Musnad Abū Yaʿlā*. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar studied this *Musnad* with Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Qudāmah al-Farāʾiḍī, who studied it with al-ʿImād Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Raḍī and Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Maʿālī al-Zabdānī, both narrating from Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Khaṭīb, who heard it from Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr, who narrated it from Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir, who narrated it from Abū Saʿd al-Kanjarūdhī, who narrated from Abū ʿAmr ibn Ḥamdān from Abū Yaʿlā himself.[2]

Zaynab al-Shiʿriyyah (d. 615) narrated *Musnad al-Sarrāj*, and Sayyidah al-Mārāniyyah narrated it from her. Abū l-Fatḥ ibn Sayyid al-Nās studied it with Umm Muḥammad Sayyidah bint Mūsā ibn ʿUthmān al-Mārānī, saying: 'Four shaykhs – Abū Bakr al-Ṣaffār, Abū Rawḥ ʿAbd al-Muʿizz al-Harawī, Ismāʿīl al-Qārī and Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shiʿrī – narrated to us.' Zaynab, Ibn al-Ṣaffār and al-Qārī studied it with Abū Bakr Wajīh ibn Ṭāhir, and Abū Rawḥ and Zaynab also studied it with Zāhir ibn Ṭāhir; and Zaynab alone narrated from Abū l-Muẓaffar ʿAbd al-Munʿim al-Qushayrī, all of them studied it with Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Khaffāf who studied it with Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Thaqafī al-Sarrāj.[3]

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[1]See AL-RAWANDĪ, *Abū l-Fatḥ al-Yaʿmarī*, i. 256–58. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 482–83. [3]See AL-RAWANDĪ, *Abū l-Fatḥ al-Yaʿmarī*, i. 255–56.

Maʿājim and Mashyakhāt

Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah (d. 524) narrated both the small and large *Muʿjam*s of al-Ṭabarānī. Most scholars narrate these two *Muʿjam*s through her. Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn al-Maqdisī says: 'I read the small *Muʿjam* of al-Ṭabarānī with Asʿad ibn Abī l-Futūḥ ibn Rawḥ, who studied it with Fāṭimah, who studied it with Ibn Rīdhah, who studied it with al-Ṭabarānī.'[1] According to al-Ḍiyāʾ, Asʿad also narrated the large *Muʿjam* of al-Ṭabarānī from Fāṭimah.[2] Among her students, Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr was also particularly famous for teaching of these two *Muʿjam*s.[3] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar studied the middle-sized *Muʿjam* of al-Ṭabarānī with ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥallāwī who narrated it from Zaynab bint al-Kamāl, who narrated it from Yūsuf ibn Khalīl, who narrated it from Khalīl ibn Badr al-Rārānī, who narrated it from Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥaddād, who narrated it from Abū Nuʿaym who narrated it from al-Ṭabarānī.[4]

ʿĀʾishah bint Maʿmar narrated *Muʿjam Abū Yaʿlā*. Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Maqdisī says: 'I studied *Muʿjam Abū Yaʿlā* with ʿĀʾishah bint Maʿmar, who narrated it from Saʿīd al-Ṣayrafī, who narrated it from Abū Naṣr al-Kisāʾī, who narrated it from Ibn al-Muqrī, who narrated it from the author.'[5]

Shuhdah narrated *Muʿjam* of al-Ismāʿīlī from Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥārithah, who studied it with Abū Bakr al-Barqānī, who narrated it from al-Ismāʿīlī.[6]

Shuhdah also narrated *Mashyakhah* of Ibn Shādhān.[7] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read *Mashyakhah* of Ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim with Fāṭimah and Ḥabībah, daughters of Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Abī ʿUmar; both of them heard it from Ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim.[8] Zaynab bint al-Kamāl narrated *Mashyakhah* of Shuhdah. Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī says: 'I studied with Zaynab, *Mashyakhah* of Shuhdah,

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[1] ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Thabat al-masmūʿāt*, 77. [2] *Ibid.*, 77–78. [3] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 114. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 58. [5] ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Thabat al-masmūʿāt*, 87. [6] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 109–10. [7] AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 626. [8] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 446.

with Zaynab's narration from Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Khayyir, Muḥammad ibn Muqbil, Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn al-Sayyidī and al-Agharr ibn Faḍāʾil ibn al-ʿUlayyiq, all of them heard it from Shuhdah.'[1] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar narrated *Mashyakhah* of Khaṭīb Mardā from Umm Aḥmad Tatar bint al-ʿIzz Muḥammad al-Tanūkhiyyah, who narrated it from Zaynab bint al-Kamāl, who narrated from Khaṭīb Mardā.[2]

Arbaʿūnāt

Fākhirah al-Baghdādiyyah (6th century) narrated *Forty ḥadīths* of al-Nasawī. Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Maqdisī says: 'I read *Forty ḥadīths* of Ḥasan ibn Sufyān al-Nasawī with Muʾayyad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūṣī, who narrated it from Fākhirah al-Baghdādiyyah, who narrated it from ʿAbd al-Ghāfir, who narrated it from Ibn Ḥamdān, from Ḥasan ibn Sufyān. Muḥibb ibn Hilālah mentions that he has seen the record of al-Ṭūṣī's hearing from Fākhirah.[3] Umm ʿAmr Ḥafṣah bint Muḥammad ibn Abī Zayd Ḥamkā narrated *Forty ḥadīths* of Ibn al-Muqrī from Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Khallāl and his cousin Bakhtyār ibn Muḥammad, both of whom narrated it from ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn ʿUmar ibn Mūsā ibn Shammah al-Tājir, who narrated it from its author Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim ibn al-Muqrī.[4] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read *Forty ḥadīths* of Muḥammad ibn Muslim al-Ṭūṣī with ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Bālisī, who narrated it from Zaynab bint al-Kamāl who narrated it from ʿAjībah bint Muḥammad, who narrated it from Masʿūd ibn al-Ḥasan, who narrated it from ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn Isḥāq, who narrated it from Zāhir ibn Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī, who heard 35 ḥadīths of it from Muḥammad ibn Wakīʿ, who heard all of it from Muḥammad ibn Aslam.[5] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar mentioned *al-Arbaʿūn*

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[1]AL-SUBKĪ, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, 678–79. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 202. [3]ḌIYĀʾ AL-DĪN AL-MAQDISĪ, *Thabat al-masmūʿāt*, 78. [4]See the *samāʿāt* at the end of *al-Arbaʿūn* of IBN AL-MUQRĪ included in *Jamharah al-ajzāʾ al-ḥadīthiyyah*, 129–30. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 340.

al-buldāniyyah al-mukharrajah min al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr li-l-Ṭabarānī by al-Dhahabī and said: 'I read it with Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, who studied it with Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī, who heard it from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muʾmin al-Ṣūrī and Zaynab bint Makkī, who both narrated it from al-Asʿad ibn Saʿīd ibn Rawḥ and ʿĀʾishah bint Maʿmar, both narrated from Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah, who narrated it from Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah, who narrated from Ibn Rīdhah, who narrated from al-Ṭabarānī.'[1]

Ajzāʾ

Some *ajzāʾ* (sing. *juzʾ*) became very popular among the people of ḥadīth because of their high *isnād*, like *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām ibn Munabbih*, *Juzʾ al-Anṣārī*, *Juzʾ ibn ʿArafah* and *Ghaylāniyyāt*. These *ajzāʾ* were taught and learnt by women extensively. Ḥafṣah bint Mulāʿib al-Azajiyyah narrated *Ṣaḥīfah Hammām ibn Munabbih*. Shaykh Abū Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Qazwīnī read it with Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Muqrī al-Azajī, who read it with Ḥafṣah bint Mulāʿib in 608. She narrated it from Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Urmawī, who narrated it from Abū l-Ghanāʾim ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn Abī l-Qāsim al-Hāshimī by reading it with him in 465, who studied it with Imām Abū l-Ḥasan al-Dāraquṭnī in 385, who studied it with Qāḍī Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Azdī in Ṣafar 319, who narrated it from Ḥasan ibn Abī l-Rabīʿ, who narrated it from ʿAbd al-Razzāq ibn Hammām, who narrated it from Maʿmar ibn Rāshid, who narrated it from Hammām ibn Munabbih, who said: 'This is what Abū Hurayrah narrated to us from the Messenger of God.'[2]

Shuhdah narrated *Juzʾ Ibn ʿArafah*. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar studied it with Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Qudāmah al-Farāʾiḍī with his *isnād* to Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn al-Sayyidī, who

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[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 210–11. [2] AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *al-Mashyakhah*, MS. fol. 75–6.

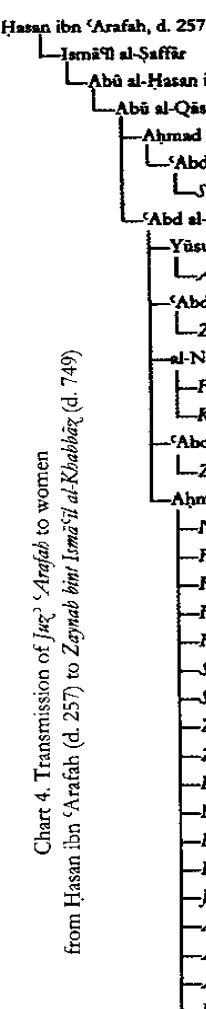


Chart 4. Transmission of *Juz' ʿArafah* to women from Ḥasan ibn ʿArafah (d. 257) to *Zaynab bint Ismāʿīl al-Khabbāz* (d. 749)

heard it from ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad al-Muthannā who heard it from Shuhdah, who heard it from Ṭirād ibn Muḥammad al-Zaynabī, Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭalḥah, Abū Saʿd ibn Khushaysh and Ibn Bayān, with the *isnād* to Ibn ʿArafah.[1]

Zaynab bint Makkī (d. 688) narrated *Juzʾ al-Anṣārī*. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the account of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn Saʿd al-Dīn: 'I have seen the record of his studying of *Juzʾ al-Anṣārī* with Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Ayyūb ibn Manṣūr al-Maqdisī,who studied it with Zaynab bint Makkī who heard it from Ibn Ṭabrazad, with his *sanad*.'[2]

Chart 5. Transmission of *Juzʾ al-Anṣārī* to women from Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Anṣārī (d. 215) to *Zāhidah bint Abī Bakr al-Staḥrāwī* (d. 749)

- **Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Anṣārī, d. 215, Basrah**
  - **Abū Muslim Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Kajjī, d. 292, Baghdad**
    - **ʿAbdullāh ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ayyūb ibn Māsī, d. 369, Baghdad**
      - **Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm al-Barmakī, d. 445, Baghdad**
        - **Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Bāqī al-Anṣārī, d. 535**
          - **Abū l-Yumn al-Kindī, d. 613**
            - ***Sitt al-ʿArab bint Yaḥyā*, d. 684, Damascus**
          - **ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad, d. 607, Baghdad**
            - **Abū l-Ḥasan ibn al-Bukhārī, d. 690, Damascus**
            - ***Āminah bint Aydughdī***
            - ***Ruqayyah bint Muḥammad al-Ḥarīrī***
            - ***Āsiyah bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim*, d. 687, Damascus**
            - ***Zaynab bint Makkī*, d. 688, Damascus**
            - ***Asmāʾ bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣaḥrāwī***
            - ***Zāhidah bint Abī Bakr al-Ṣaḥrāwī*, d. 749, Damascus**

[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 504–16. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 459–60.

Zaynab bint al-ʿAlam Aḥmad ibn Kāmil al-Maqdisī (d. 687) narrated al-*Ghaylāniyyāt*.[1] Tājanī al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575) narrated *Ḥadīth al-Mukharramī wa-l-Marwazī*,[2] *ʿAmālī* al-Maḥāmilī,[3] *Juzʾ Hilāl ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥaffār*,[4] *K. al-Ṣamt* of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā[5] and other *ajzāʾ*. ʿAzīzah bint ʿAlī (d. 600) narrated *Nuskhah Ṭālut*.[6] Karimah bint ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Qurashīyyah (d. 641) narrated *Juzʾ Luwayn*,[7] and ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAlī ibn ʿUmar al-Ṣinhājiyyah (d. 739) narrated *Juzʾ al-Biṭāqah*.[8]

Chart 6. Transmission of al-*Ghaylāniyyāt* to women from Abū Bakr al-Shāfiʿī (d. 354) to *Zaynab bint Makkī* (d. 688)

Abū Bakr al-Shāfiʿī, d. 354
- ***Fāṭimah bint Hilāl al-Karjī***
- **Abū Ṭālib ibn Ghaylān, d. 440**
  - ***Zaynab bint al-Aqraʿ*, d. 493, Baghdad**
  - **Shujāʿ ibn Fāris al-Dhuhalī, d. 507, Baghdad**
    - ***Nūr al-ʿAyn bint Abī Bakr*, d. 587, Baghdad**
  - **Hibatullāh al-Shaybānī, d. 525, Baghdad**
    - ***Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Wahhāb*, d. 588, Baghdad**
    - ***Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ bint al-Mubārak*, d. 585, Baghdad**
    - **ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Sukaynah, d. 607, Baghdad**
      - ***Āsiyah bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim*, d. 687, Damascus**
      - ***Ḥabībah bint Abī ʿUmar*, d. 674, Damascus**
    - **ʿUmar ibn Ṭabrazad, d. 607, Baghdad**
      - ***Āsiyah bint Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Dāʾim*, d. 687, Damascus**
      - ***Zaynab bint Aḥmad ibn Kāmil*, d. 687, Damascus**
      - ***Sitt al-ʿArab bint Yaḥyā*, d. 684, Damascus**
      - ***Fāṭimah bint ʿImād al-Dīn*, d. 683, Damascus**
      - ***Zaynab bint Makkī*, d. 688, Damascus**

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[1] *Ibid.*, ii. 261. [2] *Ibid.*,19–20. [3] *Ibid.*, ii. 234. [4] *Ibid.*, ii. 346. [5] *Ibid.*, ii. 497. [6] *Ibid.*, ii. 54. [7] Muḥammad IBN JABIR WĀDĪ ĀSH, *al-Barnamaj*, 240. [8] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 124–25.

Musalsalāt

As I mentioned earlier, *musalsalāt* are many, and some are compiled, so we find the narrators of most of these *musalsalāt* also narrated the major compilations of them. For example, Hind bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Urmawī heard *Musalsalāt al-Ibrāhīmī* from Sitt al-ʿArab bint Muḥammad ibn al-Fakhr, who narrated it from her grandfather, who narrated it from Abū l-Yumn al-Kindī, who narrated it from Sibṭ al-Khayyāṭ, who narrated it from its author.[1]

Al-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah is the most widely transmitted of all, and indeed scholars to this day narrate it to their students as their first ḥadīth. Great numbers of women narrated it; it will suffice by way of example to mention just those women from whom Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar received it. They are: Sārah bint Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī;[2] Sūmlak bint al-Fakhr ʿUthmān ibn Ghānim al-Jaʿfariyyah;[3] Maryam al-Adhraʿiyyah, and Ghazāl the slave of al-Qalqashandī.[4]

Besides *al-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah*, women also narrated others such as *Musalsal bi-qirāʾt sūrat al-Ṣaff*, *Musalsal bi-l-samāʿ*, *Musalsal bi-l-aswadayn*. Amatullāh al-Dihlawiyyah (d. 1357) even narrated *Musalsal bi qabḍ al-liḥyah*. In this *musalsal*, every narrator says certain words while holding his beard. Her student, Shaykh Yāsīn al-Fādānī, narrated that he heard this *musalsal* from her while she was holding her chin.

Abundance of their narrations

Some of the women, like Shuhdah al-Kātibah, ʿAjībah al-Bāqdāriyyah, Zaynab bint al-Kamāl, Fāṭimah bint al-Munajjā, and Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī and her sister ʿĀʾishah, taught and narrated a huge number of small and large books. As an example, below is a list of the books taught and narrated by Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn al-Munajjā (d. 803):

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[1] *Ibid.*, iii. 360. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 162. [3] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 617. [4] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 221–22.

Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī
al-Muʿjam al-ʿalī li-l-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḥanbalī
Muʿjam al-Taqī Sulaymān b. Ḥamzah b. Abī ʿUmar
Mashyakhah Abī Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ḥusayn b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Qibābī
K. al-Sīrah al-nabawiyyah tahdhīb Ibn Hishām min al-Sīrah al-kubrā li-Ibn Isḥāq
Juzʾ fī-hi sittah majālis min amālī Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. Sulaymān b. al-Ḥārith al-Bāghindī al-Wāsiṭī
K. al-awāʾil li-Abī Bakr b. Abī Shaybah
K. al-atʿimah li-ʿUthmān b. Saʿīd al-Dārimī
K. al-qaḍāʾ wa al-shuhūd li-l-Naqqāsh
K. Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥābah takhrīj Abī ʿAlī al-Baradānī min ḥadīth Abī l-Fawāris Ṭirād b. Muḥammad al-Zaynabī
K. Faḍāʾil al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī li-Ibn Shākir al-Qaṭṭān
Juzʾ from the Ḥadīth of al-Naqqāsh, narration of Abū Muṭīʿ from him
K. al-karam wa-l-jūd li-l-Barjalānī
Ḥadīth al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. ʿUbayd al-ʿAskarī
K. birr al-wālidayn li-l-Bukhārī
K. dhamm al-liwāṭ li-l-Haytham b. Khalaf al-Dūrī
K. Faḍāʾil Mālik b. Anas
K. Faḍl al-ramy li-l-Qarrāb
K. al-Qanāʿah li Abī l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Masrūq
K. al-Farāʾiḍ al-mustakhrajah min ḥadīth Sufyān b. Saʿīd al-Thawrī
K. al-Khiḍāb li-Abī Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAmr b. Abī ʿĀṣim
K. al-ʿUzlah wa-l-infirād li-Abī Bakr b. Abī l-Dunyā
K. Dhamm al-malāhī li-Ibn Abī l-Dunyā
K. al-ʿilm li-Yūsuf b. Yaʿqūb al-Qāḍī
K. al-Qanāʿah li-Abī Bakr b. Abī l-Dunyā
al-Muʿjam al-kabīr li-Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī
K. al-Duʿāʾ li-Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī
K. Amthāl al-ḥadīth li-l-Rāmahurmuzī
K. al-Mudārāh li-Ibn Abī l-Dunyā
K. al-Iʿtikāf li-Abī l-Ḥasan al-Ḥammāmī
K. al-ʿIshrah li-Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī
K. al-Hadāyā li Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Isḥāq al-Ḥarbī
K. al-murūʾah li-l-Ḍarrāb
K. al-ʿilm li-Abī Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Saʿīd al-Marwazī
K. Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān li-Ibn al-Ḍurays

K. al-Bukāʾ li-Jaʿfar b. Muḥammad b. al-Mustafāḍ al-Firyābī
K. al-Manāsik li-l-Ṭabarānī
Ḥadīth al-Mukhallis takhrīj Abī l-Fatḥ b. Abī l-Fawāris
Mashyakhah Yaʿqūb b. Sufyān
Ḥadīth Abī Bakr b. Khallād
Ḥadīth ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAlī al-Sufunnī
Musnad Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ of Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī
ʿAwālī ʿAbd al-Razzāq
K. al-Ṣalāh from Muṣannaf ʿAbd al-Razzāq
Ḥadīth Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʿUthmānī
Fawāʾid al-Zubayr b. Bakkār
Ḥadīth Aḥmad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Miṣrī
Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. Ḥarb
Intikhāb al-Silafī ʿalā al-Sarrāj
Amālī al-Maḥāmilī min riwāyat al-Aṣbahāniyyīn
Ḥadīth Abī ʿAmr ʿUthmān b. Aḥmad b. al-Sammāk
Ḥadīth Abī Jaʿfar b. al-Munādī
Fawāʾid Abū ʿAmr b. Ḥamdān
al-Jawāhir wa-l-laʾālī fī al-abdāl wa-l-ʿawālī li-Abī l-Qāsim b. ʿAsākir
al-Safīnah al-Baghdādiyyah
Ḥadīth Ḥājib b. Aḥmad al-Ṭūsī
ʿAwālī al-Layth b. Saʿd
Ḥadīth Abī Muḥammad b. Saʿīd
Amālī Abī Muṭīʿ
Abdāl al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. al-Jaʿd
Ḥadīth Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Aḥmad b. ʿUmar al-Ḥammāmī
Amālī Abī l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. Bishrān
al-Thaqafiyyāt
Ḥadīth Abī Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. ʿAmr b. al-Bakhtarī
Amālī Ibn al-Jarrāḥ
Ḥadīth al-Khurāsānī
Ḥadīth Ḥanbal b. Isḥāq al-Shaybānī
Ḥadīth Abī Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh b. ʿAlī al-Ābnūsī
Amālī al-Bāghindī
Musnad Aḥmad b. Manīʿ al-Baghawī
Ḥadīth ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baghawī ʿan Abī ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām
Ḥadīth Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. Makhlad

Ḥadīth Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Aswārī
Ḥadīth Muṭayyan
Amālī Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Yaḥyā b. ʿAbdkūyah
Fawāʾid Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh b. al-Ḥusayn al-Aṣbahānī
Ḥadīth Abī Yaʿlā Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. al-Muthannā
Juzʾ Kākū
Ḥadīth Abī Nuʿaym
al-Muntakhab min ḥadīth Abī Kurayb Muḥammad b. al-ʿAlāʾ b. Kurayb
Ḥadīth Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Zayd b. ʿAlī b. Shahrayār
ʿAwālī Abī l-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī
ʿAmālī Abī l-Shaykh al-Aṣbahānī
Amālī l-Ustādh Abī Ṭāhir Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Maḥmish al-Ziyādī
al-Aḥādīth al-latī khūlifa fī-hā Mālik fi-l-Muwaṭṭā li-Abī l-Ḥasan al-Dāraquṭnī
Ḥadīth Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī
Arbaʿuna ḥadīthan min riwāyah Abī l-Fatḥ ʿAbd al-Wahhāb b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣābūnī
al-Akhbār wa-l-ḥikāyāt wa-l-nawādir min riwāyah Daʿlaj b. Aḥmad
Ḥadīth Abū ʿAlī b. al-Ṣawwāf
ʿAwālī Karīmah bint ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Zubayriyyah
al-Kanjarūdhiyyāt
Fawāʾid Zāhir b. Aḥmad al-Sarakhsī
Fawāʾid Sammūyah
Amālī Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shīrāzī
Ḥāl Abī Aḥmad al-ʿAskarī li al-Silafī
Ḥadīth Abī Muslim Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdillāh b. Muslim al-Kajjī
K. al-Fitan of Abī Muslim Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdillāh b. Muslim al-Kajjī
K. al-Arbaʿīn of Ibn Shanbūyah
Ḥadīth Asmāʾ bint Aḥmad b. ʿAbdillāh al-Bahrāniyyah
Ḥadīth Muḥammad b. Juḥādah
Ḥadīth Qutaybah b. Saʿīd
Ḥadīth Abū l-Qāsim ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Naysābūrī (Ibn ʿUlāayyik)
al-Muntaqā min ʿawali Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shīrāzī
Ḥadīth Māmūn b. Hārūn
Ḥadīth Abī Bakr b. al-Muqrī
Ḥadīth Abī Bakr Aḥmad b. Kāmil, al-Qāḍī Abī ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh b. Aʿlam, Aḥmad b. ʿUthmān al-Admī
Ḥadīth al-Ḍabb li-Abī l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī
Ḥadīth Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Ghaffār b. Ushtah

Majālis Abī l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥurafī
Musnad Kaʿb b. Mālik wa-Abī Ayyūb al-Anṣārī min Musnad Abī ʿAmr Aḥmad b. Ḥazim b. Abī Gharazah al-Kūfī
Ḥadīth Ibn Abī Gharazah
K. al-Intiṣār li-Imāmay al-amṣār li-Abī l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī
Ḥadīth Sufyān al-Thawrī wa Shuʿbah wa Mālik wa Abī Ḥanīfah wa jamāʿah min al-muqillīn of *al-Bakkāʾī*
K. al-Tafsīr ʿan Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah
Ḥadīth Abī l-Ḥusayn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ābnūsī
Ḥadīth Abī Yaʿlā al-Khalīl b. ʿAbdillāh al-Khalīl al-Qazwīnī fī l-qahaqahah wa-ghayri-hā
Fawāʾid Yūsuf b. ʿĀṣim al-Rāzī
Ḥadīth Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. Abī ʿAlī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥamdānī
Ḥadīth Nāfiʿ b. Abī Nuʿaym al-Qārī
Ḥāl al-ʿAbbās li-Abī Ṭāhir al-Silafī
Ḥadīth Abī Bakr b. Khuzaymah (Fawāʾid al-fawāʾid)
Amālī Abī l-Qāsim ʿĪsā b. ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā b. al-Jarrāḥ
Ḥadīth Abī Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Abī Thābit
Ḥadīth Abī ʿUmar ʿAbdillāh b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb
Gharāʾib Shuʿbah
Musnad Raqabah b. Miṣqalah li-Abi l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī
al-Muʿjam al-ʿAlī li-Qāḍī al-Ḥanbalī
Nuzhat al-Ḥuffāẓ li-Abī Mūsā al-Madīnī
Ḥadīth al-ʿAṭārudī li-Abī Nuʿaym al-Aṣbahānī
Ḥadīth al-Ḍiyāʾ min Shuyūkhi-hi
al-Dhayl ʿalā aḥādīth al-ʿAṭarudī
Ḥadīth Abī Sahl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAbdillāh b. Ziyād al-Qaṭṭān
Ḥadīth al-Ḥasan b. Mūsā al-Ashyab
K. Ṭuruq man kadhaba ʿalayya li-Abī Muḥammad b. Saʿīd
Ḥadīth Ibn Maʿrūf ʿan shuyūkhi-hi
K. Ṭuruq man kadhaba ʿalayya li-l-Ṭabarānī
K. al-Aḥādīth al-mukhtārah mimmā laysa fi l-Ṣaḥīḥayn aw aḥadi-himā li-l-Ḥāfiẓ Ḍiyāʾ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Maqdisī
K. al-Amr bi-ittibāʿ al-Sunan li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Manāqib aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
K. al-Ṭibb al-nabawī li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Ṭuruq ḥadīth al-ḥawḍ li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Faḍl al-ʿAshr wa-l-uḍḥiyyah li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ

K. al-Nahy ʿan sabb al-aṣḥāb li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
ʿAwālī l-asānīd li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
al-Ruwāh ʿam muslim li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Muwāfaqāt Sulaymān b. Ḥarb li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Muwāfaqāt Rawḥ b. ʿUbādah li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Muwafāqāt ʿAbdillāh b. Yazīd al-Muqrī li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Muntaqāh min ʿawālī ʿAbdillāh b. Bakr wa ʿAbdillāh b. Numayr wa Abī ʿabd al-Raḥmān al-Muqrī
Muntaqāh min ʿawālī Saʿīd b. Manṣūr
ʿAwālī Abī ʿĀṣim al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Makhlad
ʿAwālī Sulaymān b. Dāwūd al-Hāshimī
ʿAwālī Abī Nuʿaym al-Faḍl b. Dukayn
Muntaqāh min al-ruwāh ʿan al-bukhārī
Muntaqāh min faḍāʾil al-shām
Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
K. Dhikr al-ḥurūf wa al-ṣawt li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
K. al-Ṭibb al-nabawī li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Ṭuruq ḥadīth al-ḥawḍ al-nabawī li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
al-Ruwāh ʿan Muslim li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
K. al-Baʿth li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
Muntaqāh min K. al-Ikhtiṣaṣ fī aḥwāl al-mawqif wa al-iqtiṣāṣ li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ
al-Abdāl al-ʿawāl li-Ḥāfiẓ al-Ḍiyāʾ[1]

COLLECTIONS OF THE WOMEN'S NARRATIONS

The ḥadīths and narrations of many of the women scholars have been compiled separately. I list below a selection, with the briefest of notes, from the more famous of those compilations, making some effort to pick from different periods:

Musnad ʿĀʾishah. ʿĀʾishah, the wife of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*, narrated from him a lot of ḥadīths. In *Musnad* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, there are 2405 ḥadīths narrated by her. Abū Bakr ibn

[1] *Majmūʿ fīhi Rasāʾil li-l-Ḥāfiẓ* IBN NĀṢIR AL-DĪN AL-DIMASHQĪ, 296–98; IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 389–434; *idem*, *al-Muʿjam al-mufahras*, 56, 60, 65, 71, 95, 109, 111, 124-5, 137–38, 175, 183, 222, 238, 255, 257, 266, 317, 325, 344, 353, 364; ʿAbd al-Ḥayy AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 615–17, 937.

Abī Dāwūd collected those ḥadīths of ʿĀʾishah which are narrated by Hishām ibn Urwah from his father from ʿĀʾishah in a *juzʾ* called *Musnad ʿĀʾishah.* The book does not include all ḥadīths of ʿĀʾishah nor all the narrations of Hishām ibn Urwah from his father from ʿĀʾishah. Only a single manuscript of it, in an unremarkable hand and with some marginal annotations, is known; it is held in al-Maktabah al-Ẓāhiriyyah in Damascus. However, it does record many *samāʿāt* of great scholars like al-Ḍiyāʾ al-Maqdisī, Ibn al-Bannāʾ, Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī and others. The manuscript has been edited by Abū l-Ghaffār ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq Ḥusayn al-Balūshī; it was published in 1405 [1985] by Maktabat al-Aqṣā from Kuwait.

al-Istīʿāb li-mā istadrakathu ʿĀʾishah ʿalā l-aṣḥāb. Besides narrating a lot of ḥadīths and giving fatwas, ʿĀʾishah critiqued the narrations and opinions of many Companions. Imām Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Muḥsin ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Shiḥī al-Baghdādī (d. 489) compiled her critique in a *juzʾ*. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar has mentioned this *juzʾ* and narrated it.[1] Uzay Shams obtained the only manuscript of it from Khudā Baksh Library, Patna and edited it; it was published by al-Dār al-Salafiyyah in Bombay in 1416 [1996]. Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī (d.794) included most of it in his *al-Ijābah li-īrād mā istadrakathu ʿĀʾishah ʿalā al-ṣaḥābah.* This was published in Damascus in 1939, edited by Saʿīd al-Afghānī; a third edition appeared from Beirut in 1400 [1980]. Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī (d. 911) summarized al-Zarkashī's work and named it *ʿAyn al-Iṣābah fī istidrāk ʿĀʾishah ʿalā al-ṣaḥābah.* It was published in 1396 [1976] from Azamgarh, India as an appendix to *Sīrah ʿĀʾishah* by S. Sulaymān Nadwī. This edition of 1976 unfortunately has many mistakes. I have benefited from all three of these books, added to them and compiled a more comprehensive work under the title *al-Istīʿāb li-mā istadrakathu ʿĀʾishah ʿalā al-aṣḥāb.*

Musnad Fāṭimah. Ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī collected all ḥadīths of Fāṭimah, and those ḥadīths that refer to her virtues in a *juzʾ* named *Musnad Fāṭimah al-Zahrāʾ raḍī Allāhu ʿan-hā wa-mā warada fī faḍli-hā.* It has 184 ḥadīths in all in no particular order, with 28 Prophetic ḥadīths, and al-Suyūṭī did not write a preface or annotate the work.

Juzʾ Bībā. This is a *juzʾ* of ḥadīths related to the great and long-lived shaykhah, Umm al-Faḍl, Umm ʿIzzā Bībā bint ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-

[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 59.

Harthamiyyah al-Harawiyyah (d. 474). It was published, edited by ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Farīwāʾī, by Dār al-Khulafā li al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, Kuwait in 1406. Its one hundred pages contain 119 ḥadīths. The editor's introduction has a biographical account of Bībā, with the names of her teachers and her famous students. It is a very high *juzʾ*. Al-Dhahabī says: 'She has a *juzʾ* which is known by her name.'[1] Ibn Rushayd al-Sabtī narrated it with his *isnād* to her.[2] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read it twice with his shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Aḥmad al-Tanūkhī,[3] with his shaykh Aḥmad ibn Abī Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī,[4] and with Abū Hurayrah ibn al-Dhahabī.[5]

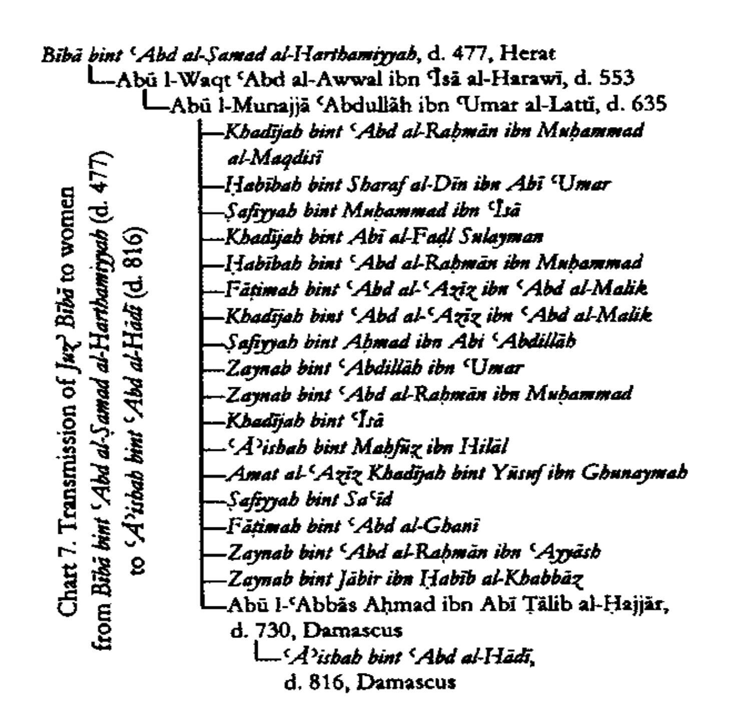


Chart 7. Transmission of *Juzʾ Bībā* to women from *Bībā bint ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Harthamiyyah* (d. 477) to *ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hādī* (d. 816)

[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-ʿIbar*, ii. 336. [2] Ibn Rushayd al-Sabtī, *Milʾ al-ʿaybah*, v. 223. [3] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 119. [4] *Ibid.*, i. 272. [5] *Ibid.*, i. 152.

Juzʾ Bībā has always been immensely popular and its teaching attended by large audiences. One reading of this *Juzʾ*, with Abū l-Munajjā ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar al-Lattī in al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī in Qāsyūn, Damascus on Monday, 24 Shawwal 633, was attended by 338 people.[1]

Mashyakhah Shuhdah. This *Mashyakhah* of Shuhdah bint Abī Naṣr Aḥmad ibn al-Faraj al-Baghdādī al-Ibrī (d. 574) was compiled in her lifetime by her student ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Mubārak ibn al-Akhḍar (524–611). Most of its 114 narrations are Prophetic ḥadīths. In this work, Shuhdah has narrated from 27 of her shaykhs. Dr. Rafaat Fawzī ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib edited it from a MS of 26 folios in the library of Kaprili in Turkey. It was published from Cairo in 1415 [1994]. It is a well-known *mashyakhah*. Al-Dhahabī says in his account of her: 'She had a *mashyakhah* which we have learnt.'[2] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read it with Ibrāhīm al-Tanūkhī, who read it with Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥajjār, Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Ḥajjāj al-Mizzī, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Fakhr and Muḥibb ʿAbdullāh ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Muḥibb with their *isnāds*.[3]

Mashyakhah Khadījah. This *Mashyakhah* of Khadījah bint al-Qāḍī al-Anjab Abū l-Makārim al-Mufaḍḍal ibn ʿAlī al-Maqdisī (d. 618) was complied by Ḥāfiẓ Zakī al-Dīn al-Mundhirī and read to her.[4]

Mashyakhah Karīmah. This *Mashyakhah* of the great Syrian shaykhah Umm al-Faḍl Karīmah bint Abī Muhammad ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Qurashiyyah al-Zubayriyyah (d. 641) was compiled by Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Birzālī in eight *ajzāʾ*.[5] Al-Dhahabī studied it.[6] Karīmah also has a *juzʾ* containing her ḥadīths of high *isnād*, which Ibn Ḥajar studied with Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad al-Dimashqiyyah.[7] There is mention in the sources of a third *juzʾ* containing *Aḥādīth musāwāh wa muṣafaḥāt wa muwāfaqāt wa abdāl wa aḥādīth ʿawāl*.[8]

Mashyakhah ʿAjībah. About this *Mashyakhah* of the great and long-lived shaykhah, Ḍawʾ al-Ṣabāḥ ʿAjībah bint Abī Bakr al-Bāqdāriyyah (d. 643), al-Dhahabī says: 'She was unique in the world and her *Mashy-*

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[1]See *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī*, 509–12. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xx. 542. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 144–45. [4]AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *al-Takmilah*, iii. 42. [5]Id., *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 641–650), 94. [6] Id., *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 93. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 418.[8]See MUṬĪʿ AL-ḤĀFIẒ, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Muzffarī*, 337.

akhah was in ten *ajzā*ʾ.'[1] Abū Ḥafṣ Sirāj al-Dīn ʿUmar ibn ʿAlī al-Qazwīnī narrated it from many, among them: Rashīd al-Dīn Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Qāsim al-Muqrī, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Naṣīr ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥalāwah, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Anbārī, ʿAfīf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin ibn Abī l-Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Ghaffār al-Azazī, Sharaf al-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿĪsā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Maʿālī ibn Ḥamad al-Muṭaʿʿam and Sitt al-Mulūk Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī l-Badr.[2]

Mashyakhah Sayyidah al-Māraniyyah. This is the *Mashyakhah* of Sayyidah bint Mūsā ibn ʿUthmān ibn Dirbās al-Māraniyyah (d. 695). Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read the second part of it with Zayn al-Dīn al-ʿIrāqī and Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī.[3] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī also narrated it.[4]

Juzʾ Nuḍār bint Abī Ḥayyān. Nuḍār bint Abī Ḥayyān (d.730) studied with al-Dimyāṭī and a group of the students of al-Zabīdī, and she got *ijāzah*s from a group of teachers. She taught and also compiled this collection of her ḥadīths.[5]

Mashyakhah Wajīhah al-Ṣaʿīdiyyah. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says about this *Mashyakhah* of Wajīhah bint ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn Sulṭān al-Anṣāriyyah al-Ṣaʿīdiyyah al-Iskandarāniyyah: 'Taqī al-Dīn ibn ʿArām compiled her *Mashyakhah.* I read part of it with Tāj al-Dīn ibn Mūsā, who heard it from her. Ibn Rāfiʿ also compiled a *mashyakhah* for her before that.[6] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read the whole of this *Mashyakhah* with Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iskandarānī.[7] Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī (d. 1382) also narrated it.[8]

Mashyakhah Zaynab al-Sulamiyyah. This *Mashyakhah* of Zaynab bint al-Khaṭīb Yaḥyā ibn Izz al-Dīn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿAbd al-Salam al-Sulamī al-Dimashqīyyah (d. 735) has been extensively narrated by the scholars. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar read it with Abū Bakr ibn Ibrāhīm al-Farāʾiḍī.[9]

Mashyakah Zaynab bint al-Kamāl. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī narrated this *Mashyakhah* of Zaynab bint al-Kamāl Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xxiii. 233. [2]AL-QAZWĪNĪ, *al-Maskaykhah*, MS. fol. 136. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-Muʾassas*, ii. 210. [4]See AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 653. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, iv. 395. [6]*Ibid.*, iv. 406. [7]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 492. [8]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 654. [9]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, i. 493.

al-Raḥīm ibn ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Aḥmad al-Maqdisī (d.740).[1] Ibn Ḥajar says: 'I read *Mashyakhah Zaynab bint al-Kamāl* with ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Bālisī in two huge *juz*ʾ, compiled by Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Saʿd.'[2] Zaynab also has a *Mashyakhah al-mashāʾikh*, which Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī has narrated with his *sanad* to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, who narrated it from Umm Muḥammad Ās bint Aḥmad ibn Ḥassān, who narrated it from Zaynab herself.'[3] She also has a *juz*ʾ containing a selection of ḥadīths, about which ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī says: 'I have a *juz*ʾ of ḥadīths of Umm ʿAbdillāh Zaynab bint al-Kamāl, compiled by Ḥāfiẓ ʿAlam al-Dīn al-Birzālī, it contains 31 ḥadīths, and there are some records of hearing by imāms in it.'[4] Another book of hers, *Muwāfaqāt ʿāliyāt*, compiled by al-Birzālī, is referred to by Ibn Ḥajar, who says in his account of his Shaykh Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣāliḥī: 'I read with him the second ten from *Muwāfaqāt Zaynab bint al-Kamāl*, compiled by al-Birzālī.'[5] Ibn Ḥajar read the whole *Muwāfaqāt Zaynab* with Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Baʿlī al-Ḥanbalī,[6] Khadījah bint Abī Bakr al-Kūrī,[7] ʿAlī ibn Ghāzī ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣāliḥī al-Kūrī,[8] ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Bālisī,[9] Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Simsār,[10] and parts of it with ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Urmawī[11] and ʿUmar ibn Muḥammad al-Maqdisī.[12]

Mashyakhah Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm al-Maqdisīyyah. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī narrated this *Mashyakhah* of Fāṭimah bint Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Shaykh Abī ʿUmar al-Maqdisīyyah (d. 747) with his *sanad* to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, who narrated it from Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Urmawī, who narrated it from Fāṭimah herself.[13]

Mashyakhah Zaynab bint al-Khabbāz. Ibn Ḥajar narrated this *Mashyakhah* of Umm ʿAbdillāh Zaynab bint Najm al-Dīn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Khabbāz (d.749) from his shaykh ʿUthmān ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿUthmān al-Karkī, who heard it from Zaynab.[14] ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī narrated it with his *sanad* to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar.[15]

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[1]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 653. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-muʾassas*, ii. 347. [3]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 644. [4]*Ibid.*, ii. 460. [5]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Majmaʿ al-Muʾassas*, i. 237. [6]*Ibid.*, i. 566. [7]*Ibid.*, i. 588. [8]*Ibid.*, ii. 270. [9]*Ibid.*, ii. 347. [10]*Ibid.*, ii. 544. [11]*Ibid.*, ii. 232. [12]*Ibid.*, ii. 322. [13]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 654. [14]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, 208. [15]See AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 654.

Muʿjam Maryam al-Nābulsiyyah. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar compiled this *Muʿjam* of Amatullāh Maryam bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Aḥmad al-Nābulsiyyah (d. 758). Hājir bint al-Sharaf al-Maqdisī narrated it from Abū l-Maʿāli ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar al-Ḥallāwī, who narrated it from Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ghālī al-Dimyāṭī, who heard it from Maryam herself. An incomplete version (ed. Majdī al-Sayyid Ibrāhīm, Cairo: Maktabah al-Qurʾān, n. d., about 80 pp.) has only one *juzʾ* out of the 24 *ajzāʾ* of her *musnad.* The editor, regrettably, gives no information about the other parts.

Muʿjam Maryam al-Adhraʿiyyah. This *Muʿjam* of Maryam bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Adhraʿiyyah (d. 805) was compiled by Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in one volume.[1]

Mashyakhah Ḥasanah al-Ṭabariyyah. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī narrated this *Mashyakhah* of Ḥasnah bint Abī l-Yumn Muḥammad ibn al-Shihāb Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī al-Makkiyyah (d. 808) with his *sanad* to Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, who narrated it from her.[2]

Mashyakhah ʿĀʾishah bint Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī. ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī has mentioned this *Mashyakhah*[3], and narrated it with his *isnād*s to Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī, Jalāl al-Dīn Suyūṭī and al-Kamāl ibn Ḥamzah, all of them from Taqī al-Dīn ibn Fahd, al-Kamāl Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Zayn, both directly from her.[4]

Mashyakhah Fāṭimah bint Khalīl. This is the *Mashyakhah* of Umm al-Ḥasan Fāṭimah bint Khalīl ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Kinānī (d. 838). Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar compiled it and joined with the *mashyakhah* of another of his teachers and called it *al-Mashyakhah al-Bāsimah li-l-Qibābī wa Fāṭimah.* This *Mashyakhah* is mentioned by Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī,[5] al-Najm ibn Fahd[6] and others. Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī has narrated it with *isnād* to Ibn Ḥajar, and mentioned that he has a manuscript of half of it, which is a copy of a version corrected by Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī.[7] Dār al-Farfūr in Damascus published it in 1422 [2002] edited by Dr. Muḥammad Muṭīʿ al-Ḥāfiẓ from a single copy available in the library of Berlin. That copy, written in Cairo in 865, is in the hand of Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Nābulsī, a student of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar. In it there are altogether 166

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah,* 88. [2]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris,* ii. 655. [3]*Ibid.*, 653. [4]*Ibid.*, 864. [5]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 91. [6]IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh,* 406. [7]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris,* ii. 635–36.

shaykhs mentioned. Among them 52 are common to both Qibābī and Fāṭimah, 84 Qibābī's alone and 30 Fāṭimah's alone; so all Shaykhs of al-Qibābī are 136 and all Shaykhs of Fāṭimah are 82.[1]

Mashyakhah ʿĀʾishah bint al-ʿAlāʾ al-Ḥanbalī. This is the *Mashyakhah* of ʿĀʾishah bint al-ʿAlāʾ ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanbalī (d. 840). Zayn al-Dīn Riḍwān compiled a *juzʾ*, starting with *al-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliy-liyyah*, of her higher ḥadīths in which the number of narrators between herself and the Prophet is nine or ten.[2] Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd says: 'Shaykh Riḍwān compiled forty of her ḥadīths which she narrated.'[3]

Mashyakhah Zaynab bint al-Yāfiʿī. This *Mashyakhah* of Zaynab bint ʿAbdillāh ibn Asʿad al-Yāfiʿī (d. 846) was compiled by Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd. Al-Kattānī referred to it by the title *al-Fawāʾid al-Hāshi-miyyah*, and narrated it through his *isnād* to Ibn Ṭūlūn, who narrated it from Muḥammad ibn Abī l-Ṣidq, who narrated it from her.[4] Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd also compiled her higher ḥadīths under the explan-atory title, *Aḥādīth tusāʿiyyāt al-isnād wa ʿushāriyyāt al-isnād.*[5] Al-Kattānī has narrated it with his *isnād* to Abū l-Baqā Muḥammad ibn al-Imād al-ʿUmarī, who narrated it from Ibn Fahd, who narrated it from Zaynab herself.[6]

Mashyakhah Asmāʾ al-Mahrāniyyah. This is the *Mashyakhah* of Asmāʾ bint ʿAbdillāh ibn Muḥammad al-Mahrāniyyah al-Dimashqiyyah (d. 867). It was compiled by Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Khalīl al-Labūdī al-Dimashqī.[7] Najm al-Dīn ibn Fahd has mentioned the work by a different title, *al-Fatḥ al-asmā al-rabbānī fī Mashyakhah Asmāʾ bint al-Mahrānī.*[8] Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī narrated it with his *sanad* to Shams al-Dīn ibn Ṭūlūn, who narrated it from Yūsuf ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, who narrated from Asmāʾ herself.[9]

al-Arbaʿūn of Umm Kirām Uns bint ʿAbd al-Karīm. This is the collection of Umm al-Karīm ibn Aḥmad al-Lakhamī, the wife (d. 867) of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar, compiled by Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī, who read it to her.[10]

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[1]*Ibid.* [2]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 78. [3]IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh* 323. [4]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 653. [5]IBN FAHD, *al-Durr al-kamīn*, 1443. [6]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, i. 294. [7]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 6. [8]IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh* 397. [9]See AL-KATTĀNĪ, *al-Muʿjam al-mufharas*, ii. 653. [10]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Jawāhir wa-l-durar*, iii. 1211.

Mashyakhah Zāhidah bint al-Ẓāhirī. This is the *Mashyakhah* of Zāhidah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Ẓāhirī, compiled by al-Muqātilī.[1] She heard ḥadīth from Ibrāhīm ibn Khalīl, and got *ijāzah*s from Ibn al-Junayzī, al-Shāwī, Ibn al-Ḥubāb and others.

Ḥumaydah's ḥadīth writings. Ḥumaydah bint Muḥammad Sharīf ibn Shams al-Dīn al-Aṣbahāniyyah (d. 1087) became known for her ḥadīth writings: Among those writings are her marginal notes on *al-Istibṣār* of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī: These notes were well received by scholars and they referred to them.[2] She also compiled a book on the narrators of ḥadīth known by the title *Rijāl Ḥumaydah.*[3]

Khunāthah's Notes. Khunāthah bint Bakkār ibn ʿAlī al-Maʿāfirī (d. 1159) wrote marginal notes on *al-Iṣabah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥabah* of Ibn Ḥajar.[4]

Mashyakhah al-Sitt Fāṭimah. The full title of this *Mashyakhah* is *al-Fahāris al-qāʾimah fī asānīd al-Sitt Fāṭimah.* Shaykh Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fādānī (d. 1410) narrated it from Muḥammad ibn Arshad ibn Saʿd, who narrated it from Sitt Fāṭimah herself.[5]

HIGHER *ISNĀD* THROUGH WOMEN TEACHERS

Ḥadīth scholars did not distinguish between men and women teachers as being more or less worthy for being men or women. They paid the same attention to preserving accurately the wording of ḥadīths narrated by women as to those narrated by men. In the later period interest in seeking out women scholars is a part of the effort to get higher *isnād*s. If a woman shaykhah outlived all the men in her generation, she would attract a lot of students, who would come to study with her in order to make their *isnād* higher. Seeking higher *isnād* is a well-established tradition among the people of ḥadīth. Al-Ḥākim cites examples of the Companions travelling for higher *isnād*s, and he calls doing so a *sunnah.*[5]

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah,* ii. 113. [2]See AFANDĪ, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, v. 404; AL-ḤAKĪMĪ, *Aʿyān al-nisāʾ*, 98; *Rayāḥīn al-sharīʿah,* iv. 185. [3]AL-TAHRĀNĪ, *al-Dharīʿah,* x. 14. [4] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah,* MS. al-Khizānah al-Ḥasaniyyah, no. 5932. MAMDŪḤ, *Iʿlām al-Qāṣī wa-l-dānī,* 66. [5]AL-ḤĀKIM, *Maʿrifah ʿulūm al-ḥadīth,* 8–9.

An *isnād*'s being high is of three kinds. Firstly, assuming the *isnād* is sound (meaning each link is authenticated and the links unbroken), it is a measure of proximity to the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. All the ḥadīths in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* are *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound). Between al-Bukhārī and the Prophet there are usually five or six people, sometimes more, sometimes fewer. However, there are 22 ḥadīths in the book where there are only three people between al-Bukhārī and the Prophet. These are the highest *isnād*s in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*. One of them is: Makkī ibn Ibrāhīm ⇐Yazīd ibn Abī ʿUbayd ⇐Salamah ibn al-Akwaʿ. In the later centuries, there are many ḥadīths which the scholars narrate through women teachers because doing so shortens the *isnād*. For example, the tenth-century scholar Abū l-Fatḥ al-Iskandarī, narrated the Prophetic ḥadīth 'None from those who pledged allegiance under the tree will enter the Fire' through the two *isnād*s below:

Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar ⇐Abū Isḥāq al-Tanūkhī ⇐Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥajjār ⇐Abū l-Munajjā ibn al-Lattī ⇐Abū l-Waqt al-Sijzī ⇐Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Fārisī ⇐Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Shurayḥ ⇐Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī ⇐Abū l-Jahm al-Bāhilī ⇐Layth ibn Saʿd ⇐Abū l-Zubayr ⇐Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh ⇐the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*

ʿĀʾishah bint ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī ⇐Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥajjār ⇐Munajjā ibn al-Lattī ⇐Abū l-Waqt al-Sijzī ⇐Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Fārisī ⇐Abū Muḥammad ibn Abī Shurayḥ ⇐Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghawī ⇐Abū l-Jahm al-Bāhilī ⇐Layth ibn Saʿd ⇐Abū l-Zubayr ⇐Jābir ibn ʿAbdillāh ⇐the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*

ʿĀʾishah bint ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī was the last surviving student of al-Ḥajjār; accordingly the *isnād* through her is a degree higher for Abū l-Fatḥ al-Iskandarī than the other.

Secondly, there is highness of *isnād* indicating proximity to one of those accepted by the *ummah* as an imām (one to be followed) in the field. In our time, if scholars narrate the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī through ʿĀʾishah al-Maqdisiyyah (d. 816), then between them and Imām al-Bukhārī there will be one less narrator than through any other *isnād*. Similarly, if scholars narrate a ḥadīth from Imām al-Ṭabarānī through Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah (d. 525),

there will be at least one narrator less than through any other *isnād*. Her *isnād* for the ḥadīths of Imām al-Ṭabarānī is the highest in the world.

Thirdly, there is highness of *isnād* for ḥadīths recorded in different compilations, such as the Six Books and other famous works. Thus a particular ḥadīth through Imām al-Bukhārī is not necessarily narrated by him with the highest *isnād* possible. This comparative highness is divided further into sub-kinds, details of which can be found in the standard works of *uṣūl al-ḥadīth*. Here, a single illustrative example must suffice. Ḥāfiẓ Abū l-Faḍl al-ʿIrāqī (d. 805) narrates a ḥadīth with three *isnād*s, one through al-Bukhārī, one through Muslim, and this one:

Sitt al-Arab bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Maqdisī ⇐Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Bukhārī ⇐Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṣaydlānī ⇐*Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah* ⇐Abū Bakr ibn Rīdhah ⇐Abū l-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī ⇐Abū Muslim al-Kishshī ⇐Abū ʿĀṣim ⇐Yazīd ibn Abī ʿUbayd ⇐Salamah ibn al-Akwaʿ.

The third one, with the two women narrators in it, is, al-ʿIrāqī says, one degree higher compared to the one through al-Bukhārī, and two degrees higher compared to the one through Muslim.[1]

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[1] ABŪ L-FAḌL AL-ʿIRĀQĪ, *K. al-Arbaʿīn al-ʿUshāriyyah*, 149–50.

Chapter 8

Women and ḥadīth critique

In the foregoing I have demonstrated that the *muḥaddithāt* were much sought after for their knowledge and piety. Here I outline some formal aspects of evaluation of women narrators within the discipline of *jarḥ* (invalidating) and *taʿdīl* (validating) the competence of an individuals to transmit reports or testimony. After that, I present what is known with certainty about the women's contribution to ḥadīth critique.

EVALUATION OF NARRATORS

The duty to assay or evaluate narrators is founded primarily on God's command (*al-Ḥujurāt*, 49. 6): *O believers, if an evil-doer (fāsiq) comes to you with news, then verify it (fa-tabayyanū) lest you injure a people in ignorance.* However, in the very same sūrah, God forbids excessive suspiciousness (*kathīran min al-ẓann*) and He describes backbiting (criticizing people behind their backs) in the strongest terms as abhorrent as would be eating a human corpse. (*al-Ḥujurāt*, 49. 12.)

Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, the great scholar among the Successors of the Companions, said: 'The knowledge is religion, so be careful about those from whom you are taking your religion.'[1] Imām al-Nawawī said: '*Jarḥ* and *taʿdīl* are made lawful for the protection of the religion.'[2] Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has discussed the controversy at some length:

Some people [...] have criticized the commenting by the experts among our imāms and the people of knowledge from our ancestors

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[1]MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Muqaddimah*. [2]AL-NAWAWĪ, *al-Taqrīb* (with commentary *al-Tadrīb*), ii. 298.

that so-and-so narrator is weak, and that so-and-so is not reliable, and whatever is similar to that, and they consider that as backbiting those about whom these comments are made if that fault [really] is found in them, and as slander if that fault is not found in them. Their ḥadīth [that they base this opinion on] is the ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was asked: What is backbiting? He said: To mention about your brother what he dislikes. The person asked: What if what I say [really] is in my brother? The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: If what you say is in your brother, then you have backbited him, and if it is not in him, then you have slandered him. What they say is not valid: for the people of knowledge are unanimous that a report should not be accepted except from an intelligent, truthful person who can be trusted in what he says. In that there is evidence of permissibility of *jarḥ* of the one who is not truthful in his narration. Also the *sunnah* of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – has come clearly attesting to what we have stated, and opposing the opinion of these who differ from us.[1]

Al-Khaṭīb then cites the ḥadīth of the woman who came to the Messenger to consult him about two men who had proposed marriage to her.

She said: Muʿāwiyah ibn Abī Sufyān and Abū Jahm have proposed to me. The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: As for Abū Jahm, he never takes his stick from his neck, and as for Muʿāwiyah, he is a poor one and has no wealth. Marry Usāmah ibn Zayd.' In this ḥadīth there is permissibility of *jarḥ* of the weak for a good cause. [...]

The backbiting that is forbidden is that where one mentions the faults of his brother in order to lower him and to humiliate him.[2]

From the earliest period, a group of Companions, their Successors and those after them commented on the qualities of the narrators of ḥadīth. Shuʿbah, known as 'the commander of the faithful' in ḥadīth, was the first to develop the practice as a distinct discipline. Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān and others got this knowledge from him, and from Yaḥyā, it came to Yaḥyā ibn

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[1] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *al-Kifāyah*, 38. [2] *Ibid.*, 39–40.

Maʿīn, ʿAlī ibn al-Madinī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. From them it came to al-Bukhārī, Abū Zurʿah al-Rāzī, Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī and Muslim, and so on. Abū Bakr ibn Kallād said to Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Qaṭṭān: 'Don't you fear that these people whose ḥadīth you have left will be claimants against you before God? Yaḥyā said: 'If they are claimants against me, it is better than the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – being a claimant against me, saying: Why did you not push away lying from my ḥadīth?'[1]

On balance, the need to prevent inaccuracies and fabrications from entering knowledge of the *Sunnah* prevailed over the unwillingness to say about someone what could hurt their feelings or their reputation. It suffices for our purpose here to summarize Ibn Ḥajar's classification of narrators into twelve 'grades' – six positive, six negative – which has been widely accepted by the community:

I. The Companions, who are accepted as narrators on the authority of the Qurʾān's praising their quality as believers.
II. The narrators who have been consistently described as *awthaq al-nās term* 'the most reliable of people' or *thiqah thiqah* 'reliable reliable' or with terms meaning 'reliable' and 'expert' (*ḥāfiẓ*).
III. The narrators who have been described at least once with words of high praise like *thiqah* or *mutqin* ('accurate') or *thabt* ('firm') or *ʿadl* ('just').
IV. The narrators whose quality has been indicated by saying of them, *ṣādiq* ('very truthful') or *lā baʾsa bi-hi* ('no harm in [taking from] him').
V. The narrators whose quality is marginally less than IV, described as *ṣadūq sayyiʾ l-ḥifẓ* ('very truthful with sound memory').
VI. The narrators who narrate few ḥadīths, and no reason is known for turning away from those ḥadīths, and are described as *maqbūl* ('accepted').
VII. The narrators from whom more than one person has narrated, but whose reliability is not explicitly confirmed, described as *mastūr* ('hidden'), or *majhūl al-ḥāl* ('whose condition is unknown').

[1] AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, ii. 299.

VIII. The narrators whose reliability is not affirmed by one whose affirmation matters, and who have pointed to as *daʿīf* ('weak').
IX. The narrators from whom only one person has narrated, and whose reliability has not been affirmed at all; described as *majhūl* ('unknown').
X. The narrators whose reliability is not affirmed at all, and about whom something negative is known; described as *matrūk* ('left') or *sāqiṭ* ('fallen') or *wāhī al-ḥadīth* ('weak in ḥadīth').
XI. Narrators who have been accused of lying.
XII. Narrators about whom lying or fabricating is established, either by their confession or otherwise (*mutahanbil kadhib*).[1]

Taʿdīl of women narrators

The expert assayers of ḥadīth have placed women narrators in all six positive grades, starting with the highest degree of reliability, namely the Companions, among them the wives and daughters of the Prophet. Several women are among those of the next rank (II), for example the great jurist *tābiʿiyyah* ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. About her, al-Dhahabī said: 'She was a scholar, jurist, proof, and holder of abundance of knowledge';[2] Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn said: 'reliable and proof'.[3] Another example is ʿĀʾishah bint Ṭalḥah, about whom Yaḥyā ibn Maʿīn said: 'reliable and proof'.[4] And there are many others of this rank from the early and the later generations.

Among many women narrators ranked III by most experts is Ḥafṣah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. Al-ʿIjlī (d. 261) said about her: 'a reliable *tābiʿiyyah*';[5] about Fāṭimah bint al-Mundhir, he said: 'a reliable *tābiʿiyyah* from Madinah';[6] about Ṣafiyyah bint Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafiyyah, he said: 'a reliable jurist of Madinah';[7] about both Diqrah bint Ghālib al-Baṣriyyah[8] and Qamīr bint ʿAmr al-Kūfiyyah,[9] he said: 'reliable *tābiʿiyyah*'.

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[1]IBN ḤAJAR, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*, *Muqaddimah*. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, iv. 508. [3]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 152. [4]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 210. [5]AL-ʿIJLĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-thiqāt*, 523. [6]*Ibid.*, 523. [7]*Ibid.*, 520. [8]*Ibid.*, 519. [9]*Ibid.*, 524.

Among those women narrators ranked by most experts as IV, V, and VI are: ᶜUmaynah bint Anas ibn Mālik,[1] Ḥabībah bint Maysarah ibn Abī Khuthaym,[2] Ḥasnah bint Muᶜāwiyah ibn Sulaymān al-Ṣarīmiyyah,[3] Khayrah, the mother of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,[4] and many others.

Jarḥ of women narrators

Grades VII–XII are grades of negative valuation or *jarḥ*. The least of those (VII) includes those whose quality as narrators is not known. Among the examples of this rank is Bahiyyah, the *mawlāh* of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. Her ḥadīth is in *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd;[5] Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said: 'She is not known.'[6]

Some women have been put in the VIIIth category by mistake and the mistake later rectified. An example is ᶜĀʾishah bint Saᶜd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ. Al-Khaṭīb narrates from Mālik: 'I asked her about some ḥadīths; then I did not like to take anything from her because of her weakness.'[7] According to the ḥadīth experts, this narration from Mālik must be wrong because Mālik has himself narrated from her – in his *Muwaṭṭā*, as Ḥāfiẓ Abū Zurᶜah al-ᶜIrāqī pointed out. Ibn Ḥibbān has confirmed her reliability and al-Bukhārī has narrated her ḥadīth.[8] Al-ᶜIjlī says about her: 'She is a reliable *tābiᶜiyyah*.'[9] Al-Ṣafādī said: 'She is among the reliable ones.'[10]

Among the women narrators at the rank indicated by the epithet 'unknown' (IX), is Unaysah. Ṣafwān ibn Sulaymān narrated from her and she narrated from Umm Saᶜīd bint Murrah al-Fihrī. Al-Bukhārī has quoted her ḥadīth in *al-Adab al-mufrad*. Ibn Ḥajar said about her: 'She is not known.'[11] Bunānah bint Yazīd al-ᶜAbshamiyyah who narrated from ᶜĀʾishah and ᶜĀṣim al-Aḥwal narrated from her. Ḥāfiẓ says about her: 'She is not

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[1] IBN ḤAJAR, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*, 743. [2] *Ibid.*, 745. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*, 746. [5] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Tajrīd asmāʾ al-ṣaḥābah*, ii. 266. [6] IBN ḤAJAR, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*, 744. [7] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 132–3. [8] Abū Zurᶜah AL-ᶜIRĀQĪ, *al-Bayān wa-l-tawḍīḥ*, 329. [9] AL-ᶜIJLĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-thiqāt*, 521. [10] AL-ṢAFĀDĪ, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, xvi. 606. [11] IBN ḤAJAR, *Taqrīb al-tahdhīb*, 744.

known.'[1] Again, some were put in this category wrongly, and the mistake corrected by later scholars. An example is al-ʿĀliyah bint Ayfaʿ, the wife of Abū Isḥāq al-Ṣabīʾī and the mother of Yūnus ibn Abī Isḥāq. About her, al-Dāraquṭnī said: 'She is obscure';[2] Ibn Ḥazm said: 'Nobody knows who she is';[3] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr said: 'She is obscure.'[4] However, Ibn Ḥibbān named her among the 'reliable' *tābiʿiyyāt.*[5] Ibn al-Jawzī said: 'They say: al-ʿĀliyah is an obscure woman, so her report cannot be accepted. We say: rather, she is a woman of great position, well-known.'[6] Ibn al-Turkmānī (d. 750) says: 'al-ʿĀliyah is well-known, her husband and her son have both narrated from her and both are expert in ḥadīth. Her ḥadīth is accepted by al-Thawrī, al-Awzāʿī, Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.'[7]

An example of the rank of those narrators whose ḥadīths are 'left' (X) is Ḥakkāmah bint ʿUthmān ibn Dīnār. Ibn Ḥibbān, al-ʿUqaylī, and al-Dhahabī have criticized her ḥadīth.[8]

As for the two lowest ranks (XI, XII), of narrators accused of fabricating ḥadīth, or whose fabrication is known, there is not a single woman among them. Al-Dhahabī says: 'I did not know among the women anyone who has been accused [of lying] or whose ḥadīth has been left [for that]'.[9]

EVALUATION OF WOMEN'S ḤADĪTHS

Women's ḥadīths are described by the experts according to the same categories as men's, as *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound), *ḥasan* (good) and *ḍaʿīf* (weak), although they are preferred over the men's in that women are not known to have narrated any fabricated ḥadīths.

There are a great number of ḥadīths narrated by women alone; the traditionists have accepted them and jurists have acted upon them. Examples were given earlier. Here is another

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[1] *Ibid.*, 744. [2] AL-DĀRAQUṬNĪ, *Sunan*, iii. 51. [3] IBN ḤAZM, *al-Muḥallā*, i. 240. [4] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Tamhīd*, xviii. 20. [5] IBN ḤIBBĀN, *K. al-Thiqāt.* v. 289. [6] IBN JAWZĪ *al-Taḥqīq*, ii. 184. [7] IBN AL-TURKMĀNĪ, *al-Jawhar al-naqī*, v. 330. [8] AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Mughnī fī al-ḍuʿafāʾ*, ii. 425. [9] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Mīzan al-iʿtidāl*, vii. 465.

example: al-Ḥākim narrated from ʿĀʾishah that 'the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – called on her and she had a curtain [hanging] which had some pictures [on it]. The colour of his face changed. Then he took the curtain and tore it with his hand and then said: The worst people being punished on the Day of Resurrection are those who copy the creation of God.' Al-Ḥākim said: 'This is a *ṣaḥīḥ sunnah*.'[1]

The experts have, in many cases, preferred ḥadīths narrated by women over those narrated by men, because the former have stronger *isnād*s and are further from containing mistakes. Al-Ḥākim narrated from Anas ibn Mālik 'that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was riding a horse, fell from it and his right side was injured. Then he led one of the prayers while sitting and we also prayed behind him sitting. After he finished the prayer, he said: The imām is made to be followed; when he prays standing then pray standing, when he bows, then bow, and when he rises then rise [...] and when he prays sitting then pray together sitting.'[2] However, ʿĀʾishah narrated that the Messenger of God in his last illness prayed sitting and Abū Bakr followed him standing. Al-Ḥākim confirms that the ḥadīth experts have preferred ʿĀʾishah's narration over that of Anas because ʿĀʾishah's has the support of other narrators.[3]

Scholars traced some discrepancies or contradictions found with some narrations by women not to the women who originally narrated them but to later narrators. There are many examples of that; here is one:

Wahb ibn Jarīr narrated from Shuʿbah, from al-Ḥakam, from Ibrāhīm, from al-Aswad, from ʿĀʾishah that she said: 'When the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was in [a state of] major ritual impurity, and he had to eat or sleep, he would do ablution *(wuḍūʾ)*.'[4] This ḥadīth is opposed by another ḥadīth narrated by Abū ʿĀṣim from Sufyān al-Thawrī, from Abū Isḥāq, from al-Aswad, from ʿĀʾishah that she said: 'The

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[1]AL-ḤĀKIM, *Maʿrifah ʿulūm al-ḥadīth*, 160. [2]*Ibid.*, 156. [3]*Ibid.*, 156–57. [4]*Ibid.*, 155.

Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – would sleep while in [a state of] major impurity without touching any water.' Al-Ḥākim says after looking through different *isnād*s for these ḥadīths: 'All these *isnād*s are sound, and the two reports oppose each other. The reports of the people of Madinah and Kufah agree on ablution, and the reports through Abū Isḥāq oppose them.'[1] So this mistake in ʿĀʾishah's ḥadīth is not from her: rather it is from some later narrators.

EVALUATION OF NARRATORS BY WOMEN

Women also made their contribution to the evaluation of ḥadīths and critique of narrators. What has been narrated from them in this regard is little, but it is significant that the experts of ḥadīth and *fiqh* have accepted it as valid. Before giving some examples, I will discuss the lawfulness of women doing *taʿdīl* and *jarḥ*.

Women's role in taʿdīl and jarḥ

Most scholars hold that *taʿdīl* and *jarḥ* by women is permissible. The reasoning of those opposed to this view is that women do not have enough information about people to pass judgement. However, this argument is useless, for if there not enough information to base *taʿdīl* and *jarḥ* on, then it is disallowed anyway, whether done by a man or woman. Imām al-Ghazālī affirms in *al-Mustaṣfā* the permissibility of women's *taʿdīl* and *jarḥ*, and he compares it with their narration of ḥadīth. Imām al-Nawawī also affirms it.[2] Qāḍī Abū ʿAlī al-Walīd al-Bājī (d. 474) says that '*tajrīḥ* and *taʿdīl* of narrators of ḥadīth by women is valid.'[3] The people of ḥadīth argue for this from the incident of the slander against ʿĀʾishah when the Prophet called on the maidservant Barīrah to inform him about her and took account of what she told him. Qāḍī Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib says: 'If it is

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[1] *Ibid.*, 156. [2] AL-NAWAWĪ, *al-Taqrīb* with its commentary *al-Tadrīb*, i. 321. [3] Abū l-Walīd AL-BĀJĪ, *Iḥkām al-fuṣūl fī aḥkām al-uṣūl*, i. 376.

said: Do you hold it obligatory to accept *taʿdīl* by the woman who knows what *taʿdīl* and *jarḥ* mean? The answer is: Yes. There is nothing that prevents from accepting that, neither any consensus nor anything else. Had there been any text or consensus then we would not have allowed it [...].'[1] Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī says: 'When it is affirmed that the report of the righteous woman is accepted, and that is the consensus of the early generation, then it is also obligatory that the taʿdīl of the narrators by women should be accepted, so the *tazkiyah* by women, which means reporting the quality of the reporter and witness, will be – as regards necessitating action upon it – the same as the report by women.'[2]

Examples of taʿdīl and jarḥ by women

ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān narrates that it was reported to ʿĀʾishah that ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar says: 'The deceased person is punished for the wailing of the living over him.' ʿĀʾishah said: 'May God forgive Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān [the *kunyah* of ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar]; he did not lie but he forgot or made a mistake. The true story is that the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – passed by a deceased Jewish woman and said: They are wailing over her and she is being punished in her grave.'[3] It is clear that ʿĀʾishah has in this instance questioned Ibn ʿUmar's preserving of knowledge (*ḍabṭ*).

Another example of that is when it was reported to ʿĀʾishah that Abū Hurayrah said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: *Shuʾm* [ill-omen] is in three things, in the house, the woman and the horse.' ʿĀʾishah said: 'Abū Hurayrah did not preserve [the whole of the matter]. He entered while the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – was saying: May God fight the Jews [for] they say there is *shuʾm* in

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[1]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Kifāyah*, 98. [2]*Ibid.* [3]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *qawl al-nabī ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam yuʿadhdhabu al-mayyit bi baʿḍ bukāʾ ahli-hi ʿalay-h*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *al-mayyit yaʿadhdhabu bi bukāʾ ahli-hi ʿalay-h*.

three things, the house, the woman, and the horse. Abū Hurayrah heard the end of the ḥadīth and did not hear the beginning of the ḥadīth.'[1]

Yaʿlā al-Taymī narrated: 'I entered Makkah three days after ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Zubayr was killed, while his body was hanging on the cross. His mother came. She was a tall, blind lady. She said to Ḥajjāj [wanting her son's body taken down]: Has the time not come for this rider to dismount? He said: The hypocrite? She said: By God, he was not a hypocrite. Rather he was a *ṣawwām* [one who fasts much], a *qawwām* [one who stands much in prayer, and] an obedient [one]. He said: Go back, old woman! You have lost sense because of old age. She said: No, by God, I have not lost my sense. For I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: In the tribe of Thaqīf there will be a liar and a destroyer. As for the liar, we have seen him – she meant Mukhtār – and as for the destroyer, that is you.'[2]

Ibn ʿAmmār narrated that Wākiʿ was asked about Umm Dāwūd al-Wābishiyyah. He said: 'She was a woman with an intelligent heart.' And Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd was asked about her; he said: 'A man asked her about Shurayḥ. She said: He was like your mother.'[3] In this report, Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd, one of the imāms of *jarḥ* is quoting Umm Dāwūd al-Wābishiyyah about a narrator (Shurayḥ). Shuʿbah narrates that his mother asked Hishām ibn Ḥassān: 'Who does Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn narrate from? He said: From Abū Hurayrah and Ibn ʿUmar. Then she said: Ibn Sīrīn did hear ḥadīth from them.'[4]

WOMEN'S ROLE IN ḤADĪTH CRITIQUE

The methodology of ḥadīth critique reached full development in the second–third century. Most of its principles relate to the

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[1]Abū Dāwūd AL-ṬAYĀLISĪ, *al-Musnad*, as cited in AL-ZARKASHĪ, *al-Ijābah*, 59. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 294. [3]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiʿ*, i. 133. [4]BAḤSHAL, *Taʾrīkh Wāsiṭ*, 109.

critical study of *isnād*s, a sophisticated and difficult discipline entailing cross-checking the narrators in order to verify who met and studied what with whom, when and where. A part of that effort of critique was concerned with verifying the actual text of the ḥadīth, alongside the labour of deriving instruction or guidance from it. Among the Companions, ʿĀʾishah is a famous practitioner of this art. While no formal or systematic statement of key principles of critique is attributed to ʿĀʾishah, it is quite clear that those principles derive from her exemplary practice. Six are illustrated below:

Checking the ḥadīth against the Qurʾān

ʿĀʾishah consistently applied the principle, later formulated and agreed upon by all jurists and traditionist, that if a ḥadīth is contradicted by a Qurʾānic verse, and there is no way of reconciling them, then the ḥadīth will be 'left'. For example, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās used to say: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – saw [i.e. actually set eyes on] his Lord twice.' Masrūq says that he asked ʿĀʾishah:

O *umm al-muʾminīn*, did Muḥammad see his Lord?
She said: What you have said has made my hair stand on end for fear! Where are you from [i.e. where is your grasp of] three things! Whoever tells you that, he is a liar. Whoever tells [you] that Muḥammad saw his Lord, he is a liar. Then she recited [*al-Anʿām*, 6. 104]: *No seeing [faculties] can encompass Him, and He encompasses all seeing [faculties]*. And [*al-Shūrā*, 42. 51]: *It is not for any human that God should speak to him unless by revelation or from behind a veil.* Whoever tells you that he knew what is in [store for] tomorrow, he has lied. Then she recited [*Luqmān*, 31. 34]: *No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow.* And whoever tells you that he concealed something, he has lied. Then she recited [*al-Māʾidah*, 5. 67]: *O Messenger, proclaim that which has been sent down to you from your Lord.* Rather, he saw [the angel of the Revelation] Jibrīl in his form twice.'[1]

ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr narrated from ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar that he said: 'The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – stood

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tafsīr*, bāb *tafsīr sūrat al-Najm.*

up on the *qalīb* of Badr [the ditch in which the unbelievers were buried] and said [to the dead]: Have you found there what your Lord had promised? Then he said: They are hearing what I am saying to them.' When this ḥadīth was mentioned to ʿĀʾishah, she said: 'Rather, the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: They know that what I am saying is true. Then she recited [*al-Naml*, 27. 80]: *Indeed you cannot make the dead hear.*[1]

Checking the ḥadīth against another, stronger ḥadīth

Another key principle derived from the practice of ʿĀʾishah is that if a ḥadīth goes against one stronger and more firmly established than it, then the weaker ḥadīth will be 'left', not acted upon. ʿUbayd ibn Rifāʿah al-Anṣārī says:

We were in an assembly where Zayd ibn Thābit also was. Then [the people there] discussed the bath after [sexual] emission. [Zayd ibn Thābit] said: If someone has intercourse and did not ejaculate, he has only to wash his private parts and do ablution like the ablution for the prayer. Somebody from that assembly stood up and came to ʿUmar and told him that. ʿUmar said to the man: Go yourself and bring him to me, so that you can be witness against him. The man went and brought him. There with ʿUmar were sitting some Companions of the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – among them, ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and Muʿādh ibn Jabal. ʿUmar said to Zayd [ibn Thābit]: O enemy of yourself, do you give a fatwa like that? Zayd said: By God, I have not invented it. Rather, I have heard it from my uncles like Rifāʿah ibn Rāfiʿ and Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī. Then ʿUmar asked those Companions who were there with him and said to them: What do you say? They differed. ʿUmar said: O slaves of God, you differ, while you are the elect of those who took part in [the battle of] Badr! Then ʿAlī said to him: Send someone to the wives of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – for they will be aware of there being something like that. ʿUmar sent to Ḥafṣah and asked her. She said: I have no knowledge of that. They sent someone to ʿĀʾishah. She said: When the circumcised part has passed the other circumcised part, then the bath is obligatory. Then ʿUmar said: If I [come to] know

[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Maghāzī*, bāb *qatl Abī Jahl.*

anyone doing that and [after so doing] he does not have a bath, I will give him a lesson.'[1]

Checking the ḥadīth against a sunnah of the Prophet

Sālim narrates from his father ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar that he said: I heard ʿUmar say: 'When [in the ḥajj] you have done the stoning [and sacrificed] and shaved, then everything becomes permissible for you except women and perfume.' Sālim continues: "ʿĀʾishah said: Everything except women. I put perfume on the Messenger on that occasion'. Then Sālim comments: 'The *sunnah* of God's Messenger – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – is more worthy to be followed.'[2]

Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said: 'I heard Abū Hurayrah giving a sermon and he said in his sermon: Whoever has got up at the time of dawn in the state of major impurity, then he should not fast. I [Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān] mentioned that to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥārith, who mentioned it to his father; he did not accept it. Then I and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān went and called upon ʿĀʾishah and Umm Salamah and we asked about that. ʿĀʾishah said the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – used to get up in the morning in the state of major impurity and he used to fast.'[3]

Qāsim ibn Muḥammad narrates that ʿĀʾishah was informed that Abū Hurayrah was saying: 'The passing of a woman in front of person praying invalidates the prayer.' She said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – would pray, and my leg would be in front of him, then he would turn it away and I would draw it back.'[4]

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[1] AL-ṬAḤĀWĪ, *Sharḥ Maʿanī al-āthār*, i. 58. [2] AL-BAYHAQĪ, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, *Ḥajj*, bāb *mā yaḥillu bi-l-taḥallul al-awwal min maḥẓūrāt al-iḥrām.* [3] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣawm*, bāb *al-ṣāʾim yuṣbi-hu junūban*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ṣiyām*, bāb *ṣiḥḥat sawm man ṭalaʿa ʿalay-hi al-fajri wa huwa junūb.* [4] ABŪ MANṢŪR AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Istidrāk umm al-muʾminīn*, 99.

Checking the ḥadīth in the light of its occasion (sabab)

ʿUrwah ibn al-Zubayr narrates that it came to the knowledge of ʿĀʾishah that Abū Hurayrah was saying: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: Being content with a whip in the path of God, is better to me than freeing an illegitimate child. And that the Messenger of God– *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: The illegitimate child is the worst of the three [father, mother, child]; and the dead person is punished for the wailing of the living.' ʿĀʾishah said:

God have mercy on Abū Hurayrah, he did not listen properly, so he did not answer properly. As for his saying, 'Being content with a whip in the path of God is better to me than freeing an illegitimate child': Now, when the verse [*al-Balad*, 90. 11–13] was revealed *But he has not attempted the steep ascent. And what will make you know what the steep ascent is? It is the freeing of a neck [from the yoke of slavery]*, it was said to him: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*: We do not have anything to free, unless it be that some of us have slave-girls who serve us and work for us [and] we could ask them to do adultery and then have some children whom we could free. Then the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam:* Being content with a whip in the path of God is better to me than commanding adultery and then freeing an illegitimate child. [Then] as for his saying that 'an illegitimate child is worst of the three', the ḥadīth was not like that. A hypocrite used to cause hurt to the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – so he said: Who will defend me from him? Someone said: O Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – besides that [he does as you say] he is an illegitimate one. Then he said: He is the worst of the three, and God says [*al-Anʿām*, 6. 164]: *And no bearer of burden bears the burden of another.* [Then] as for his saying that the deceased is punished for the wailing of the living, so the ḥadīth is not like that. Rather, the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – passed by a Jew who had died and the people of his family were wailing over him. Then he said: They are crying over him and he is being punished. God says [*al-Baqarah*, 2. 286]: *God does not burden a self beyond its capacity.*[1]

[1] AL-ḤĀKIM, *al-Mustadrak*, ii. 234.

Checking a ḥadīth against the difficulty of acting upon it

ʿUbayd ibn ʿUmayr narrates that it came to the knowledge of ʿĀʾishah that ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAmr was commanding women, when they bathed, to unravel their plaits. She said: 'Alas! why does he not command them to shave their heads!'[1]

Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Ḥāṭib narrates from Abū Hurayrah that he said: 'Whoever washes a deceased, he should bathe, and whoever carries [the body] should do ablution.' When it came to the knowledge of ʿĀʾishah, she said: 'Are the dead Muslims impure?! What harm is there in carrying wood?!'

Checking a ḥadīth for misconstruction of its meaning

Abū Salamah narrates that when death approached Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī, he called for new clothes and put them on. In doing so he was acting on what he remembered the Prophet as saying: 'I heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: The dead person will be raised in those clothes in which he dies.' When this came to the attention of ʿĀʾishah, she criticized it and said: 'God have mercy on Abū Saʿīd! The Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – meant the [garment of] actions on which a man dies. For the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: People will be resurrected, barefoot, naked, uncircumcised.'[2]

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[1] MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Ḥayḍ*, bāb *ḥukm ḍafāʾir al-mughtasilah*; IBN MĀJAH, *Sunan*, *Ṭahārah*, *bāb mā jāʾa fī ghusl al-nisāʾ min al-janābah*. [2] ABŪ DĀWŪD, *Sunan*, *Janāʾiz*, bāb *yustaḥabbu min taṭhīr thiyāb al-mayyit ʿinda l-mawt*; AL-ZARKASHĪ, *al-Ijābah*, 71.

Chapter 9

Overview by period and region

At no time in Islamic history including the present, and in no part of the Islamic world, past or present, has study of ḥadīth been considered among Muslims themselves as either redundant or obsolete. To the contrary, the relevance and utility of ḥadīth for teaching the believers how to embody the guidance of Islam in their transactions with God and with each other have always been securely fixed at the deepest level of their commitment as believers. That said, active engagement in the study and teaching of ḥadīth has varied in scope and volume in different times and places. In particular, the numbers of women engaged in the receiving and diffusing of ḥadīth, though not localized to a particular period or region, has varied markedly – at least if judged by the material that I have compiled on the *muḥaddithāt*. Interestingly, the change by period and region in the numbers of men engaged in ḥadīth study does mostly, but does not always, correspond to the change in the numbers of women.

Variation in the quality or level of attention that a particular body of knowledge receives is normal; to some degree it can be observed in all branches of knowledge, all arts and crafts and patterns of industry and commerce, and in every civilization. It is a function of how, in a particular setting, interest in a body of knowledge is motivated, how costs and rewards for engaging with it are perceived, where it fits within broader conceptions of the purposes that education is supposed to serve in the community providing it. I try in this chapter to give a sense of the general outline of when and where ḥadīth study and teaching among the women intensified, declined, revived. The outline is what the material, in gross qualitative terms, suggests to me at this very early stage of studying the material. I offer only very

tentative explanations for the bigger shifts recorded. It will not be possible to offer more secure explanations until the biographical accounts and mentions of women scholars and students can be analysed systematically, and then set alongside relevant information about the socio-economic and legal and political conditions in which the work with ḥadīth was done.

The divisions by region are self-explanatory. As for time periods, the material seems to me to fall into four main phases:

1st–2nd c. AH. In this period women narrators of ḥadīth are both many and conspicuous. The ḥadīths of women Companions and Successors are widely circulated, and recorded in the precursors of the Six Books and other major collections.

2nd–5th c. AH. This is a relatively weak period for women narrators but a peak period for men scholars and students of ḥadīth. The Six Books and major specialist studies are written at this time. The third century is the weakest for women scholars, their numbers recovering gradually through the fourth and fifth centuries.

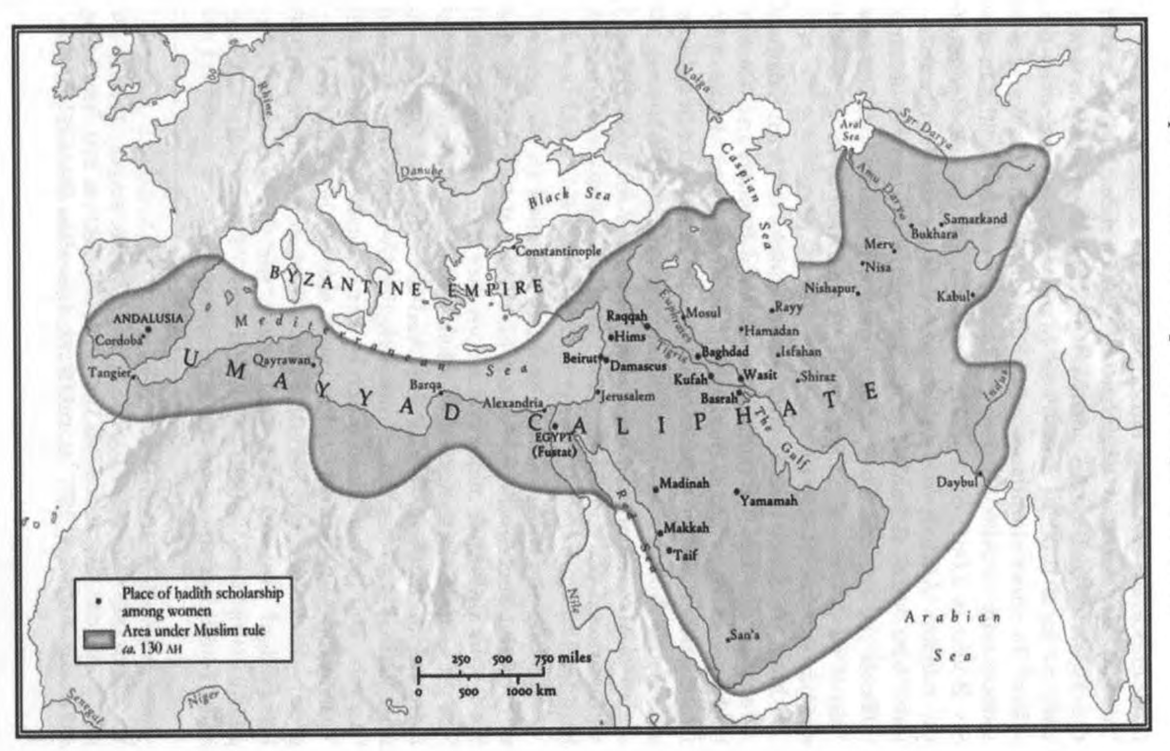
6th–9th c. AH. After the time of the women Companions, this is the brightest period in the history of the *muḥaddithāt*. From the sixth century, their numbers grow rapidly, peaking in the eighth, beginning to go down in the ninth.

10th–15th c. AH. The period of clear scholarly decline among Muslims in all Islamic sciences including ḥadīth. The decline is not particular to women; it includes men too.

FIRST PERIOD: 1st–2nd c. AH

This is considered the best, the normative, period of Islam. It is the period of the Companions – men and women who learnt the religion from the Prophet himself – of their Successors, many of whom accompanied the Companions in long years of apprenticeship; and of those who followed the Successors and who, by the end of this period, had formalized the practice of their teachers into a strict and solid scholarly discipline.

The ḥadīths of the women of this period are recorded in the major compilations of ḥadīth. Among the Companions, the



Map 2. Islamic world. Spread of *muḥaddithāt* 1st–2nd c.

most important and most famous figure in the ḥadīth and *fiqh* is ʿĀʾishah. She narrated 2,210 ḥadīths. 297 of those ḥadīths are in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*s of al-Bukhārī and Muslim; 174 are found in both, with 54 in al-Bukhārī and 69 in Muslim not recorded in the other.[1] In sheer abundance of ḥadīths, in the Six Books, she is second only to Abū Hurayrah. The total of her ḥadīths in the Six Books is 2,081, of Abū Hurayrah's 3,370. In knowledge of the religion ʿĀʾishah was a point of reference for the Companions; Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī said: 'Whenever any matter became difficult for us, the Companions of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – then we asked ʿĀʾishah about it: we found she had got knowledge of that.'[2]

Next to ʿĀʾishah in abundance of ḥadīths is Umm Salamah Altogether she has 378 ḥadīths, of which al-Bukhārī and Muslim both record 13, while al-Bukhārī has another 3 and Muslim 13.[3] Among other women Companions who narrated a lot of ḥadīths are: Asmāʾ bint Yazīd ibn al-Sakan who narrated 81; *umm al-muʾminīn* Maymūnah, who narrated 76; *umm al-muʾminīn* Ḥafṣah, who narrated 60; and Asmāʾ bint Umays, who also narrated 60 ḥadīths.

Among the most famous women narrators in the generation of the Successors is ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. In the Six Books and other major collections, her ḥadīths are plentiful. She grew up in the house of ʿĀʾishah and learnt a lot of ḥadīths from her and others. ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz said: 'No one is now [living] who has more knowledge of ʿĀʾishah's ḥadīth than ʿAmrah', and he benefited much by her counsel.[4] Al-Zuhrī said: 'Qāsim ibn Muḥammad said to me: I see, my boy, that you are greedy for knowledge. Should I not inform you of the vessel of knowledge? Go and stick to ʿAmrah, for she was under the guardianship of ʿĀʾishah.' Al-Zuhrī said: 'Then I came to her and I found her an ocean; its water never goes.'[5]

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[1] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 139. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, xii. 463. [3] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 210. [4] IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ii. 387. [5] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, iv. 508.

Another expert of this period is the great *muḥaddithah* of Basrah, Ḥafṣah bint Sīrīn, the sister of the renowned scholar Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn. Her ḥadīths too are found in all major compilations. Iyās ibn Muʿāwiyah relied on her in preference even to Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn.[1] Al-Ṣafadī says: 'She was unique in her time: jurist, truthful, virtuous and of great rank.'[2]

Another expert of this period is the famous scholar of Syria, Umm al-Dardāʾ, whose ḥadīths are also abundant in the sources. Al-Dhahabī praises her for her juristic knowledge and intelligence and for her devotion to worship.[3] Ibn Kathīr said: 'She was a *tābiʿiyyah*, devout, scholar and jurist. Men studied with her and learnt *fiqh* from her in her teaching places on the north side of the [Umayyad] Mosque, and ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān when he was caliph used to sit in her circle with other students.'[4]

Among many examples of well-known women scholars of the second century, after the *tābiʿiyyāt*, are Umm al-Aswad al-Khuzāʿiyyah and ʿUbaydah bint Nabīl al-Ḥijāziyyah. Umm al-Aswad narrated ḥadīth from Munyah bint ʿUbayd al-Aslamiyyah and Umm Nāʾilah al-Khuzāʿyyah.[5] Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Yūnus, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿAmr al-Bajalī, Muslim ibn Ibrāhīm al-Azdī and Yūnus ibn Muḥammad al-Muʾaddib narrated from her. Al-ʿIjlī said: 'She was a reliable Kufan narrator.'[6] ʿUbaydah bint Nabīl narrated from ʿĀʾishah bint Saʿd ibn Abī Waqqāṣ. Among her students were Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad al-Farawī, al-Khaṣīb ibn Nāṣiḥ, Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Wāqidī and Maʿn ibn ʿĪsā al-Qazzāz.[7]

It is clearly noticeable that, in terms of narrating ḥadīth, the time of the women Companions is the most shining period. This continued much the same into the time of their Successors. However, in the generation of those after the Successors, there are far fewer women whose ḥadīths are recorded in the famous

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[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 152. [2] AL-ṢAFADĪ, *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*, xiii. 106. [3] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ* 53. [4] IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah*, *sub anno* 82. [5] IBN ḤAJAR, *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*, xii. 486. [6] *Ibid.* [7] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 239.

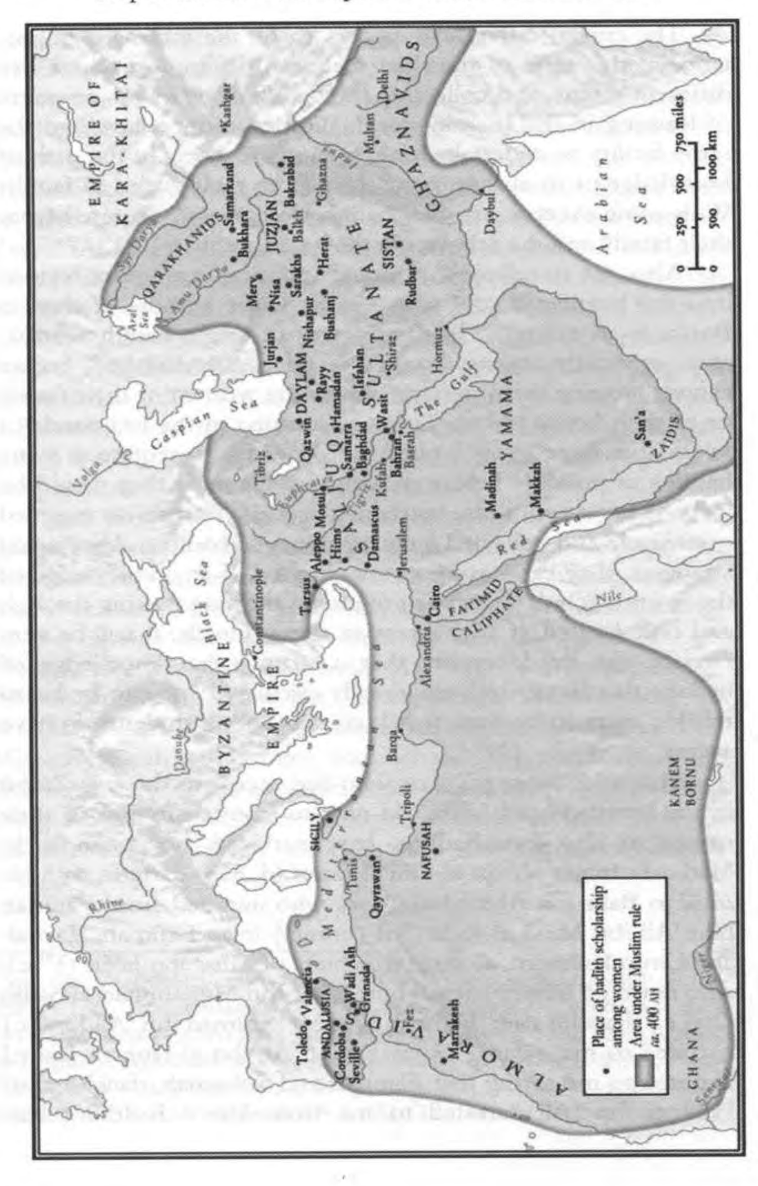
compilations. The most likely reason for this is that the men's interest in ḥadīth was becoming very strong and they were travelling extensively to collect ḥadīths from every city and in as short a time as possible – travelling then was arduous. So, when they were compiling ḥadīths, they recorded from the women of their generation only the ḥadīths that they could not get from men scholars, whom it was easier to find and find out about. This trend became still more pronounced in the next period.

SECOND PERIOD: 3rd–5th c. AH

This is the so-called 'golden period' of ḥadīth study, when the major genres of ḥadīth compilation and the major compilations are put together and circulated. It is also the period when travelling for 'the knowledge' is at its peak. In the beginning of the second century there are scholars of the rank of al-Zuhrī (d. 124) in Madinah, ʿAmr ibn Dīnār (d. 123) in Makkah, Qatādah and Yaḥyā ibn Abī Kathīr in Basrah, Abū Isḥāq al-Sabīʾī and al-Aʿmash in Kufah; at the end of the century Mālik in Madinah, Ibn ʿUyaynah in Makkah, Shuʿbah in Basrah, Sufyān al-Thawrī in Kufah. By the beginning of the third century all the major centres of ḥadīth – in Kufah, Basrah, Baghdad, the Ḥaramayn, Syria and Egypt – are dominated by the male scholars. Women appear to be so far absent from the circles of ḥadīth teachers that we do not find a single woman named among the long list of the teachers of al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Nasaʾī and Ibn Mājah, the authors of the Six Books. Before this period, by contrast, we find women named among the teachers of Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī and Shuʿbah. So, what might explain this abrupt absence of women teachers?

We need to differentiate between receiving 'the knowledge' and transmitting it. As for the former, women continued to study ḥadīth, and there is no indication that people paid less attention to the education of their daughters. It will be remembered that Mālik's daughter Fāṭimah memorized the whole of his *Muwaṭṭā* and became a narrator of ḥadīth, while his son did not.

Map 3. Islamic world. Spread of *muḥaddithāt* 3rd–5th c.



The crucial difference appears to be the increased importance at this time of travelling between different teachers and different towns, and collecting the ḥadīth of every major centre of learning in the Islamic world. Women cannot have had the same facility to undertake long, arduous journeys in the path of knowledge or to absent themselves from their duties to family. With some exceptions, their ḥadīth were mostly acquired from their family and the scholars in the near locality.

Also, the travelling students are coming from outer regions into the heartlands of Islam – each of the authors of the Six Books is an example. In their places of origin ḥadīth scholarship, especially among women, is not yet established. So we cannot imagine them narrating from the women of their family or of their home towns. Then, on arriving in the heartlands of Islam, they have a very limited time in which to acquire as many ḥadīths as possible before moving on: naturally they would be inclined to sit with those teachers who have themselves travelled extensively and collected large numbers of ḥadīths. Also, being strangers, they can have had only limited, if any, knowledge of the women scholars active in the town they are passing through and only limited, if any, access to them. Finally, it will be very rare by the third century that a woman has knowledge of ḥadīths that have not been already circulated and can be heard reliably narrated by men, to whom the visiting students do have access.

That said, those scholars who had access to the *muḥaddithāt* in the heartlands of Islam did narrate from them and so their names, as also their ḥadīths, have survived. For example, in Madinah: Imām Shams al-Dīn al-Jazarī (d. 813) narrates with his *isnād* to Bakr ibn Aḥmad al-Qaṣrī, who narrated from Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn Mūsā al-Riḍā (3rd century) from Fāṭimah, Zaynab and Umm Kulthūm, all three daughters of Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar (3rd c.), who narrated from Fāṭimah bint Jaʿfar ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣādiq (2nd c.) that she said: 'Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī [2nd c.] narrated to me, saying: Fāṭimah bint ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn [1st c.] narrated to me saying that Fāṭimah and Sukaynah, daughters of Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī narrated to me from Umm Kulthūm bint

Fāṭimah bint al-Nabī – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – saying: Have you forgotten the Prophet's word to ʿAlī: You are to me as Hārūn was to Mūsā.'[1] Also in Madinah: ʿĀʾishah bint al-Zubayr ibn Hishām ibn ʿUrwah, whose ḥadīths have been recorded by Qāḍī Abū ʿAbdillāh al-Mahāmilī.[2] In Baghdad in this period, Rayḥānah wife of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and his slave Ḥusn, both received ḥadīth from him.[3] In Kufah there was Fāṭimah bint al-Zayyāt. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has narrated her ḥadīth.[4] In Kufah there was Fāṭimah bint Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Sharīk, whose ḥadīths were recorded by Ḥafṣ ʿUmar ibn Shāhīn.[5] In Basrah, the ḥadīths of Ghufayrah bint Wāqid were recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān.[6] In Wāsiṭ, there was Fāṭimah bint Isḥāq ibn Wahb ibn al-ʿAllāf al-Wāsiṭī; her ḥadīths were recorded by Imām al-Ṭabarānī.[7] In Syria, there was Umm al-ʿAbbās Lubābah bint Yaḥyā ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī ibn Yūsuf al-Kharrāz, whose ḥadīths were recorded by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.[8]

Near the end of the third century ḥadīth activity started to decline, a trend that continued until the fifth. Perhaps the fourth century is the weakest for ḥadīth activity among women. In this century Baghdad is the major centre of *muḥaddithāt*. One of the famous ones among them is Amat al-Wāḥid bint al-Ḥusayn ibn Ismāʿīl al-Mahāmilī (d. 377). Al-Dāraquṭnī says: 'She learnt ḥadīth from her father, Ismāʿīl ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Warrāq, ʿAbd al-Ghāfir ibn Salāmah al-Ḥimṣī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Miṣrī, Ḥamzah al-Hāshimī and others. She memorized the Qurʾān and learnt *fiqh* according to imām al-Shāfiʿī's school and other sciences.'[9] Another example is Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥarrāniyyah (d. 312), who was born in Baghdad,

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[1]See IBN AL-JAZARĪ, *Asnā al-maṭālib*, 49. [2]See AL-MAHĀMILĪ, *K. al-Duʿāʾ*, 186. [3]Abū Ḥusayn IBN ABĪ YAʿLĀ, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābilah*, i. 429. [4]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *Talkhīṣ al-mutashābih*, i. 113. [5]IBN SHĀHĪN, *al-Targhīb fī faḍāʾil al-aʿmāl wa thawāb dhālik*, 167. [6]IBN ḤIBBĀN, *K. al-Thiqāt*, iv. 9. [7]AL-ṬABARĀNĪ, *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr*, ii. 151. [8]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Talkhīṣ al-mutashābih*, i. 482. [9]Id., *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 443.

then brought to Egypt where people studied ḥadīth with her.[1] Another examples is Amat al-Salām bint al-Qāḍī Abī Bakr (d. 390); the names of a number of her students[2] are found in al-Khaṭīb.[3]

An important feature of this century is that we begin to find *muḥaddithāt* in Khurasan and Transoxania. Their numbers continued to grow in this part of the world until it was destroyed by the Mongols at the beginning of the seventh century. Among the famous traditionists of this area in the fourth century were: Umm Salamah ʿĀminah bint Abī Saʿīd al-Ḥasan ibn Isḥāq ibn Bulbul al-Naysabūrī,[4] Jumūʿah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Maḥmiyyah from Nishapur (who also taught ḥadīth in Baghdad),[5] and Umm ʿAbdillāh Zaynab bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-ʿIjliyyah, who taught ḥadīth in Jurjan in 347.[6]

Toward the end of the fourth century we find the first records of people bringing young children, even infants, to the ḥadīth classes. Those who heard ḥadīth before they were five were expected to report their hearing by using the formula 'we attended the hearing' rather than 'we heard'. However, some scholars did not approve even this. Al-Dhahabī says in his account of Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbdullāh ibn al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Muḥammad al-Khallāl (385–470), brought by his father to hear ḥadīth from Abū Ḥafṣ al-Kattānī: 'His hearing from al-Kattānī was when he was in his fifth year. From this time [...] the system went upside down. Rather, *ijāzah* is better in strength than [this] attendance, for whoever heard ḥadīth just attending [a class] without understanding, he did not receive anything. The one who has got *ijāzah* has got something. Yes if, along with the attendance, there is a permission from the shaykh, that is better.'[7]

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[1] *Ibid.*, 441. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (*sub anno* 381–400), 195. [3] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ , *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 443. [4] See 'Ḥasan bin Isḥāq ibn Bulbul' in IBN AL-ʿADĪM, *Bughyat al-ṭalab*, 2295–98. [5] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Taʾrīkh Baghdād*, xiv. 444. [6] AL-SAHMĪ, *Taʾrīkh Jurjān*, 506. [7] See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 369.

In the fifth century, women from non-Arab countries excelled the Arabs in the field of teaching and narrating ḥadīth. For example, in Nishapur Fāṭimah bint Abī ʿAlī al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Daqqāq (d. 480) taught major books of ḥadīths including the *Musnad* of Abū ʿAwāmah.[1] Al-Samʿānī says: 'She was the pride of the women of her time, no one similar to her has been seen in her good character; she was a scholar of the Book of God and virtuous.'[2] In Isfahan, there was ʿĀʾishah bint Ḥasan ibn Ibrāhīm al-Warkāniyyah al-Aṣbahāniyyah (d. 460). She taught ḥadīth regularly. Ibn al-Samʿānī says: 'I asked Ḥāfiẓ Ismāʿīl about her. He said: She is a righteous woman scholar; she gives sermons to the women; she wrote down *Amālī* of Ibn Mandah from him. She is the first person from whom I got ḥadīth. My father sent me to study with her. And she was an ascetic.'[3] In Herat, there was Bībā bint ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Harthamiyyah (d. 477). Al-Samʿānī says: 'She was a righteous and pure woman' and 'The people who learnt ḥadīth from her cannot be counted.'[4] In Marw there was Karīmah bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥatīm al-Marwaziyyah (d. 465) who taught *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* many times.[5] About her al-Samʿānī wondered if anyone had seen her like among women.[6]

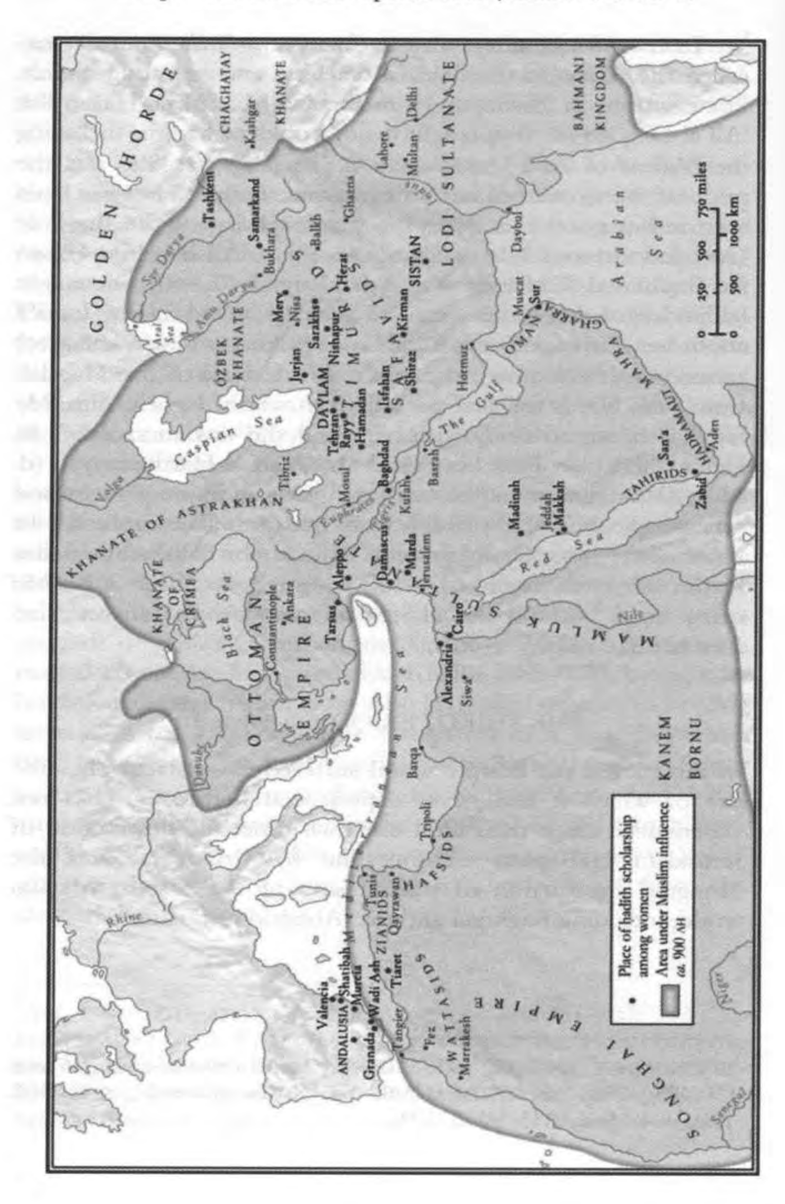
THE THIRD PERIOD: 6th–9th c. AH

In this period the Islamic world suffered two catastrophes the like of which it had never experienced before and has not experienced since then until our own time: the destruction of Jerusalem and parts of Palestine by Crusaders, and the Mongols' destruction of major parts of the eastern Muslim world, including Baghdad and the ʿAbbāsid caliphate.

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[1]IBN NUQṬAH, *al-Taqyīd*, 497. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-islām* (*sub anno* 471–480), 296. [3]See AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, xviii. 302. [4]*Ibid.*, 404. [5]*Ibid.*, 233. [6]*Ibid.*, 234.

Map 4. Islamic world. Spread of *muḥaddithāt* 6th–9th c.



Yet, in spite of the destruction suffered during it, this period is characterized by a revival of ḥadīth sciences, after a long period when *fiqh* had been more dominant. This revival is also reflected in the women's role in study and teaching of ḥadīth. Indeed, except for the time of the women Companions, this period is the best for the women's advancement in, and major contribution to, ḥadīth. The comment by al-Dhahabī quoted earlier refers to this time: in his biographical account of Imām Ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd ibn al-Najjār (578–643), he writes: 'Ibn al-Sāʿātī says: Among his teachers were three thousand men and four hundred women.'[1]

How could so great a disaster as the loss of Jerusalem and major defeats in Central Asia and Mesopotamia coincide with the rise of interest in ḥadīth? The answer is that great catastrophes can shake people up, individually and collectively, enable them to re-think their commitments, to either save or forever lose their way of life. The terrible events the Muslims had to endure led them to return to their tradition and strive to rescue their religion and reform their society. For Muslims, the only reform that is sound Islamically is the one that strives to guide people by the *Sunnah* of God's Messenger, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam.* This explanation is supported by the fact that the revival began with the scholars of Jerusalem and the people of Syria – they were the ones most directly affected by the political and military disaster of the Crusades. Ibn Asākir al-Dimashqī and the family of Ibn Qudāmah, who left Jerusalem as the Crusaders occupied it, settled in Damascus. Here they revived the ḥadīth sciences; then, others of the same mind later joined them from elsewhere in Syria. Their women also participated in this great effort to consolidate and revive 'the knowledge'.

When the renewed quest for the knowledge first began, the major centres of ḥadīth were not in Damascus or Cairo. Rather, people in quest of the knowledge had to travel to Baghdad or, further east, to Isfahan. In Baghdad there were a large number

[1] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 133.

of female traditionists to whom the people travelled. The most important among them was Shuhdah bint al-Ibrī (d. 574) and Tājanni bint ᶜAbdillāh al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575). All the major traditionists of the time studied with them. In Isfahan the most important shaykhah at this time was Fāṭimah bint ᶜAbdillāh al-Jūzdāniyyah (d. 524), considered one of the most outstanding figures in the whole history of ḥadīth. It is her student Fāṭimah bint Saᶜd al-Khayr (d. 600) who diffused ḥadīth in Damascus and then in Cairo. By the end of this century, ḥadīth sciences had strengthened greatly in Damascus so that it was becoming established as a major centre. Among the women teachers of ḥadīth of this period was Āminah bint Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Ṭāhir ibn al-Rār al-Dimashqiyyah (d. 595). She studied ḥadīth with her grandfather, the qāḍī Abū l-Mufaḍḍal Yaḥyā ibn ᶜAlī al-Qurashī and Abū Muḥammad ᶜAbd al-Karīm ibn Ḥamzah. Her father obtained for her a copy of Sunan of Abū Dāwūd, and she read part of it with ᶜAbd al-Karīm ibn Ḥamzah.[1] Qāḍī Muḥyī l-Dīn Abū l-Maᶜālī ibn al-Zakī, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qūṣī and others studied with her. She also endowed a *ribāṭ* in Damascus.[2]

That Ibn al-Najjār studied ḥadīth with four hundred women teachers during this period is not the only record we have of their activity. Ḥāfiẓ Ibn ᶜAsākir (d. 571) received ḥadīth from more than 80 women. His colleague and a famous traditionist Abū Saᶜd al-Samᶜānī (d. 562) has provided accounts of 69 of his shaykhahs. Abū Ṭāhir al-Silafī (d. 576) studied with a score of women teachers. Even Ibn al-Jawzī, a famous scholar and great preacher who never travelled, has narrated from three women.

The seventh century began with the cataclysm of the Mongol devastation. Chinggiz Khan began his campaign against the Khwarizmshah in 616. His hordes destroyed Bukhara, Samarqand, Hamadan, Zinjan, Qazwin, Marw, and Nishapur. Under his grandson Hulagu they entered Baghdad and laid waste to the city, all its treasures, including its libraries, and massacred its

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[1] IBN ᶜASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 49. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 591–600), 180.

people. Then they headed to Aleppo and did the same. They occupied Damascus in Jumādā al-Ūlā 658. On their march to Egypt they suffered their first major defeat in ʿAyn Jālūt in Ramaḍān 658. Then the Mamlūk sulṭān Baybars turned the tide of war decisively in the Muslims' favour and forced the Mongols to flee Syria, although they remained on its borders and the danger of incursions and looting raids persisted.

The consequences of the Mongols' invasion were severe. The centres of scholarship of Samarqand, Bukhara, Nishapur and Baghdad were utterly devastated, and they never regained their importance as centres of ḥadīth study and teaching. It is a mercy that just before that disaster, Syria and Egypt had become established as major focal points for Islamic scholarship.

The Mamlūk rule over Egypt and Syria endured from 648 to 923. During this period scholarly life became more dynamic, and many grand colleges and mosques were built in the Mamluk domains. The revival of ḥadīth had begun in Syria, before it took hold in Egypt, when (as I noted earlier) the family, friends and followers of Shaykh Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah left Palestine in 551 and settled in Qāsyūn in Damascus. Here Shaykh Abū ʿUmar Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī built al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah in 555. Some years later, in 599, Jāmiʿ al-Ḥanābilah was built there. Both were very important centres for ḥadīth science. The first centre dedicated expressly for the study of ḥadīth was Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Nūriyyah in Damascus in 559 founded by the sulṭān Nūr al-Dīn al-Shahīd. Al-Malik al-Kāmil al-Ayyūbī built Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Kāmiliyyah in 622 in Cairo and his brother al-Malik al-Ashraf built two more centres for ḥadīth study in Damascus. These institutions proved to be vital resources for the community in Syria and Egypt, in the seventh century and subsequently. They always included women teachers and women students, most of whose names are preserved in the records of *samāʿāt* attached to the ḥadīth books.

In my biographical dictionary of the *muḥaddithāt*, five volumes are devoted to the women of the seventh century, and six volumes each for the eighth and ninth centuries. As well as

Syria and Egypt, ḥadīth scholarship among women also grew in the cities of the Ḥaramayn. Perhaps some 90% of the entries in the dictionary for the seventh to ninth centuries are for the women of Syria, Egypt, and the Ḥaramayn.

THE FOURTH PERIOD: 900–1500 AH

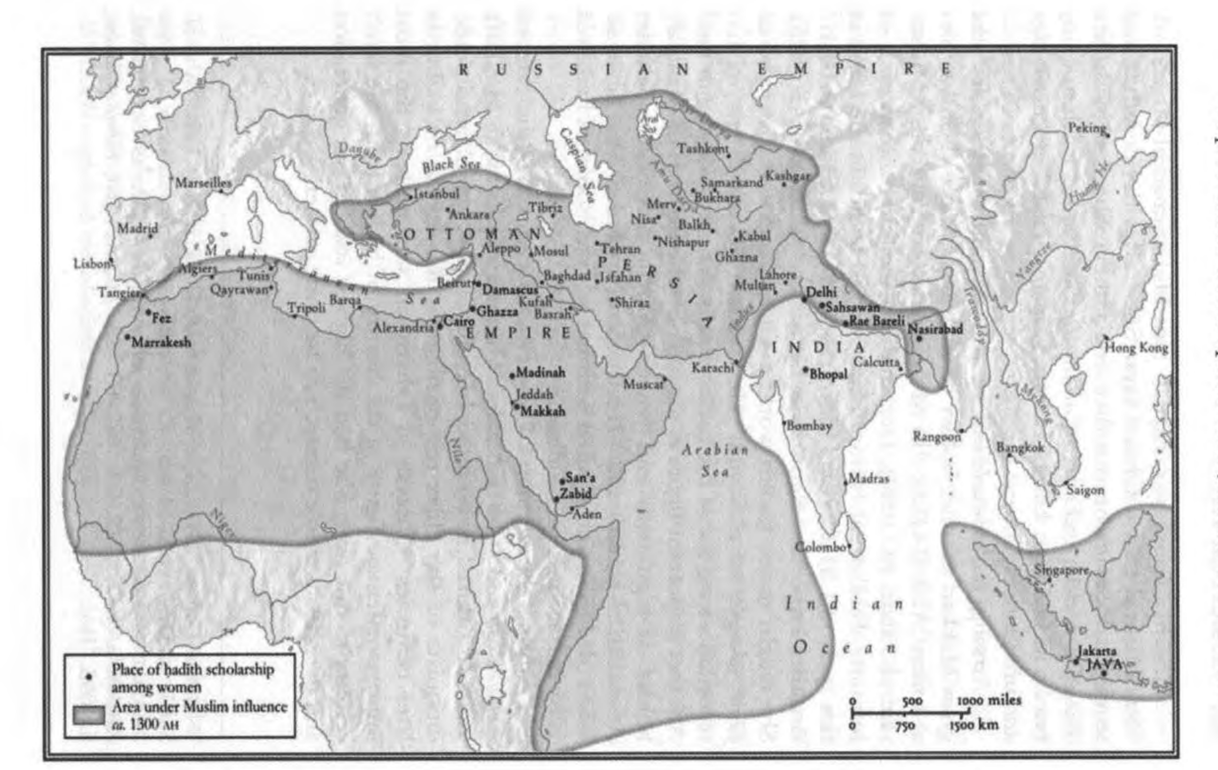
This period is one of decline, so that a single volume of the biographical dictionary suffices for each century. The decline is not confined to women, nor only to the study of ḥadīth. Rather, it is a general phenomenon affecting men as well as women, and all branches of the Islamic sciences.

Among the most prominent women teachers of ḥadīth in this period were: Umm al-Khayr Amat al-Khāliq al-Dimashqīyyah (d. 902). Al-Suyūṭī says about her: 'By her death people fell one rank in ḥadīth; for she was the last person who narrated from ʿĀʾishah bint ʿAbd al-Hadī, who was the last student of al-Ḥajjār.'[1] Another important figure is ʿĀʾishah bint Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿUmar al-Ḥanbaliyyah (d. 906). Ibn Ṭulūn says about her: 'She studied ḥadīth with a group of people including Abū Bakr ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn, with whom she studied *al-Majlis al-Awwal* of his *ʿAmālī*, which contains *al-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah* and a commentary on it. Ibn Ṭulūn studied with her.[2] Another famous figure is Shaykhah of Zabid, Aṣmāʾ bint Kamāl al-Dīn Mūsā al-Ḍajāʾī (d. 904). Al-ʿAydrūsī says about her: 'She was righteous; a devout; reciter of the Qurʾān; she used to read *tafsīr* and books of ḥadīth, and taught women, gave sermons to them, and taught them self-discipline. Her words had an impact on the heart. Sometimes she wrote letters of commendation to the sultan, qāḍī and *amīr*; her recommendations were accepted and not rejected.[3]

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[1] AL-SUYŪṬĪ, *al-Minjam fī l-muʿjam*, 99. [2] IBN ḤUMAYD, *al-Suḥub al-wābilah*, 511. [3] AL-ʿAYDRŪSĪ, *al-Nūr al-sāfir*, 40.

Map 5. Islamic world. Spread of *muḥaddithāt* 10th–14th c.



Another figure was Zaynab bint Muḥammad al-Ghazzī (d. 980). Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī says: 'She read with her father, and studied a lot with her brother (my father). She read with him *Tanqīḥ al-Lubāb*, and part of *al-Minhāj*. She copied for him many books in her own hand.' He goes on to praise her knowledge and uniqueness.[1]

Among the *muḥaddithāt* of the eleventh century are: the great Makkan scholar, holder of high *isnād*, Zayn al-Sharaf bint al-Imām ʿAbd al-Qādir ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaḥyā ibn Mukarram al-Ṭabarī (d. 1083). Her students included the *musnad*s of her time, Ibrāhīm al-Kūrānī (who revived ḥadīth in the Hijaz in this period), Ḥāfiẓ of Hijaz ʿAbdullāh ibn Sālim al-Baṣrī.[2] Another important figure was her sister Mubārakah (d. 1075). She taught major ḥadīth works such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr* of al-Suyūṭī.[3] Her student Ḥasan al-ʿUjaymī has recorded a long list of the ḥadīth works that he studied with her.[4] Another important figure is the long-lived Shaykhah of Madinah, holder of high *isnād* and jurist, Fāṭimah bint Shukrullāh ibn Asadullāh al-Kūrāniyyah.[5] Her students included Abū Isḥāq al-Sibāʾī (d. 1155) who studied with her a lot of books of ḥadīth in 1081 in her house in Madinah.[6]

Among the women of the twelfth century is the famous *muḥaddithah* and jurist of Makkah Quraysh al-Ṭabariyyah (d. 1107). Fāliḥ al-Ẓāhirī has counted her among the seven famous traditionists of the Hijaz responsible for the revival of ḥadīth in later centuries. Quraysh al-Ṭabariyyah was perhaps the most important female figure in the history of ḥadīth from the tenth century to our time. She had the highest *isnād* in her generation and deserves a whole research to be done on her.

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[1]Najm al-Dīn AL-GHAZZĪ, *al-Kawākib al-sāʾirah*, iii. 138,139. [2]ʿAbd al-Sattār al-Dihlawī al-Makkī, *K. al-Azhār al-ṭayyibah al-nashr*, 1. [3]See MARDĀD ABŪ L-KHAYR, *Mukhtaṣar nashr al-zuhūr*, 399. [4]IBN AL-ʿUJAYM, *Khabāyā al-zawāyā*, MS. fols. 182–83. [5]See AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 1095. [6]*Ibid.*

In the thirteenth century the great *muḥaddithah* of Delhi, from a family of ḥadīth scholars, Amat al-Ghafūr bint Isḥāq al-Dihlawī studied with her father, who was the best scholar of ḥadīth at that time. She acquired high authority in both ḥadīth and *fiqh*. When her husband, himself a great scholar, faced any difficulty in ḥadīth or *fiqh* he consulted her and benefited from her.[1] Other important figures were Raḥmah bint al-Jinān al-Miknāsiyyah, who learnt many ḥadīths by heart from the Six Books,[2] and Fāṭimah bint Ḥamad al-Fuḍaylī (d. 1247). This Fāṭimah was an expert of *tafsīr*, ḥadīth, *fiqh* and *uṣūl*. She had studied many books of ḥadīth and received many *Musalsalāt*. Many famous scholars of Makkah studied with her and praised her piety and righteousness, devotion and asceticism, and for her writing of many books in beautiful calligraphy.[3]

In the fourteenth century the most important expert of ḥadīth was Amatullāh bint al-Imām ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Dihlawiyyah (d. 1357) in Madinah. She studied with her father, many times over, all the Six Books, as well as many *ajzāʾ* and *thabat*s.[4] She also received from him all the *Musalsalāt*. Her father took a lot of interest in her education and obtained high *ijāzah*s for her from the leading traditionists of that time.[5] At her home in Madinah, she taught *Qudūrī* as well as books of ḥadīth.[6] Her students included the major scholars of the time, like ʿUmar Ḥamdān al-Maḥrasī (d. 1368), Aḥmad al-Ghumārī and Muḥammad Yāsīn al-Fādānī (d. 1410).

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[1]See AL-ḤASANĪ, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, vii. 93. [2]KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, i. 445. [3]See IBN AL-ḤUMAYD, *al-Suḥub al-wābilah*, iii. 1227. [4]Notebooks containing details of one's narrations or teachers. [5]AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 1115. [6]Muḥammad ʿĀshiq Ilāhī AL-BARNĪ, *al-ʿAnāqīd al-ghāliyah min al-asānīd al-ʿāliya*, 176.

OVERVIEW BY REGION

Ḥijāz

The centres of ḥadīth scholarship in the Ḥijāz were the cities of the Ḥaramayn, Makkah and Madinah. Madinah was the first centre for ḥadīth scholarship in the world for the good reason that the Companions were based there. Students travelled to Madinah from Iraq and Syria in order to learn the *Sunnah* from the Companions, men and women. Madinah remained an active locus of ḥadīth study until the end of the second century. After that only a small number of *muḥaddithāt* were based there until the ninth century, when the revival of ḥadīth scholarship started in Madinah and continued until the fourteenth century. The traditionists, including women, who visited Madinah as part of their ḥajj or *ʿumrah* journeys, also sometimes taught ḥadīth there. The most important *muḥaddithah* from among the outsiders was Fāṭimah al-Baṭāʾiḥiyyah, who came there from Syria. She taught in the mosque of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*, and great scholars studied with her. Among the last major traditionists in Madinah were the just mentioned Amatul-lāh bint ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Dihlawiyyah (d. 1357) and Fāṭimah Shams Jahān al-Jarkasiyyah, the wife of Shaykh al-Islām ʿĀrif al-Turkī. Among those who studied with her were scholars such as Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī (d. 1382) and ʿUmar Hamdān al-Maḥrasī (d. 1368).[1]

Because of ḥajj, Makkah always had some ḥadīth teachers. In the first centuries, ḥadīth was a little weak there among the women. Perhaps the most famous *muḥaddithah* to teach there was Karīmah al-Marwaziyyah in the fifth century. She taught the whole *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* there many times. Hādīth scholarship became stronger in Makkah in the eighth century and women traditionists continued to turn up there until the fourteenth century. Perhaps the last woman traditionist in Makkah was the

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[1] AL-KATTĀNĪ, *Fihris al-fahāris*, ii. 724.

pious and righteous shaykhah, Āminah bint al-Ḥabīb Muḥammad ibn Ḥusayn al-Ḥibashī (d. 1342). She studied ḥadīth with her father, the mufti of Makkah, and her husband Imām ʿAlawī ibn Aḥmad al-Saqqāf.[1]

Iraq

Basrah evolved in the first century as the second centre after Madinah for ḥadīth scholarship among women. It was strengthened there by the stay of ʿĀʾishah, as I mentioned earlier. The ḥadīths narrated from that time are recorded in all the major compilations. It was further enhanced by the migration there of the famous Companion and great jurist, Umm ʿAṭiyyah al-Anṣāriyyah. A number of the Companions and important Successors in Basrah received the knowledge from her.[2] Baqīʿ ibn Makhlad has recorded forty of her ḥadīth in his *Musnad*.[3]

Among the famous *muḥaddithāt* of the generation of the Successors were Ḥafṣah bint Sīrīn, who diffused much knowledge in Basrah. There also was Muʿādhah al-ʿAdawiyyah, wife of Ṣilaḥ ibn Ashyam. Ḥadīth activity remained strong among the women of Basrah until the end of the second century. After that I did not find any record in the sources of an important *muḥaddithah* based there.

For the women, the most important centre of ḥadīth after Basrah has been Kufah. Among the traditionist Companions who settled there are: Zaynab bint Abī Muʿāwiyah al-Thaqafiyyah the wife of ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Salāmah bint Ḥurr al-Fuzāriyyah,[4] Jamrah bint ʿAbdillāh al-Yarbūʿiyyah al-Tamīmiyyah,[5] Fāṭimah bint al-Yamān,[6] Qutaylah bint Sayf al-Anṣāriyyah,[7] Māriyah,[8] the servant of the Prophet, Umm Yāsir al-Anṣār-

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[1]See AL-ḤIBASHĪ, *al-Dalīl al-mushīr*, 66. [2]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʿāb* , ii. 777. [3]See BAQĪ IBN MAKHLAD (ed. Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhirī) *ʿAdad mā li-Kull wāḥid min al-ṣaḥābha min al-ḥadīth*, 87. [4]MUSLIM, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, i. 219. [5]AL-ASKARĪ, *Taṣḥīfāt al-muḥaddithīn*, 888. [6]MUSLIM, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, i. 219. [7]AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 270. [8]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʿāb* , ii. 762.

iyyah,[1] and Jasrah bint Dajājah al-Kūfiyyah, whose being a Companion is disputed.[2] She narrated ḥadīth from Abū Dharr, ʿAlī, ʿĀʾishah and Umm Salamah; al-ʿIjlī has confirmed her reliability.[3] The most important Companion who travelled and diffused knowledge there was Fāṭimah bint Qays.[4] Among the Successors in Kufah the most important woman narrator was Qamīr bint ʿAmr al-Kūfiyyah, wife of the famous scholar Masrūq ibn al-Ajdaʿ.[5] Hādīth scholarship remained active among the women of Kufah until the end of the second century.

From the beginning of the third century, Baghdad emerged as the main centre of women's ḥadīth scholarship. The most important figure there was Umm ʿUmar bint Abī l-Ghuṣn Ḥassān ibn Zayd al-Thaqafiyyah, who narrated from her father, and from her husband Saʿīd ibn Yaḥyā ibn Qays. Abū Ibrāhīm al-Tarjumānī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Jarjarāʾī, Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Harawī and ʿAlī ibn Muslim al-Ṭūsī are among those who narrated from her.[6] Also figures of significance in this century were the women of the house of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, the sisters of Bishr al-Hāfī and others. For ḥadīth scholarship among women the greatest centre remained Baghdad until the end of the sixth century. The last of the major women scholars to teach ḥadīth there extensively were Shuhdah al-Kātibah (d. 574) and Tajannī al-Wahbāniyyah (d. 575). After the Mongols' devastation of Baghdad in the seventh century, its shining history as a centre of ḥadīth scholarship, whether for men or for women, ended and has never been recovered.

al-Shām (Greater Syria)

Hādīth scholarship was established in Syria also in the first century. At that time the excellent *muḥaddithah* and jurist Umm al-Dardāʾ taught ḥadīth and *fiqh* in her house and also in the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem. Fāṭimah bint ʿAbd al-

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[1] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl,* xxxv. 325. [2] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah,* iv. 267. [3] *Ibid.,* 266. [4] IBN AL-ATHĪR, *Usd al-ghābah,* vii. 224. [5] IBN MĀKŪLĀ, *al-Ikmāl,* vii. 100. [6] AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *Tārīq Baghdād,* xiv. 432.

Malik ibn Marwān, wife of the righteous caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, was also an active ḥadīth narrator in Damascus at the end of the first century, as affirmed by the famous historian, Abū Zurʿah al-Dimashqī.[1] After the generation of the Successors, ḥadīth scholarship among women in Syria lessened; the sources do not record any major Syrian *muḥaddithah* until the end of the fifth century. The sixth witnessed a revival on a scale without parallel anywhere in the Islamic world in any period of its history. In the seventh, Syria became the most important centre of ḥadīth scholarship for both men and women. That continued throughout the eighth and ninth centuries. After the tenth it declined, as elsewhere in the Islamic world.

The quality and scale of interest of Syrian traditionists in major compilations of ḥadīth and small *ajzāʾ*, whether learning and hearing them or teaching and transmitting them is quite extraordinary. Here in this period we find women learning ḥadīth and teaching it in al-Madrasah al-ʿUmariyyah and other colleges, in the grand Umayyad mosque, the Jāmiʿ al-Muẓaffarī and other mosques; in *ribāṭ*s, in gardens and private houses. Sometimes the classes of these women were attended by hundreds of both men and women.

Some of these Syrian women teachers are distinguished by having the highest *isnād*. The one who narrated the whole *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with the highest *isnād* among men or women was ʿĀʾishah bint ibn ʿAbd al-Hadī (d. 816) from Damascus, the last student of al-Ḥajjār in the world. Before her, by a century, was Sitt al-Wuzarāʾ al-Tanūkhiyyah (d. 716), the last student of Ḥusayn ibn al-Mubārak al-Zabīdī and Abū l-Munajjā Ibn al-Lattī among all the woman of the world. And there was Zaynab bint al-Kamāl (d.740) who outdid men and women alike in the sheer abundance of her teaching of both major books and small *ajzāʾ*.

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[1] IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq, Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 291.

Egypt

Ḥadīth scholarship first came to Egypt also in the first century. Perhaps the best woman scholar to come to Egypt was the righteous and noble Nafīsah bint Amīr al-Muʾminīn al-Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib al-ʿAlawiyyah al-Ḥasaniyyah (d. 208). Ibn Kathīr says: 'She was a wealthy lady, did a lot of favours to the people, especially those paralysed, those with severe illness, and to all other ill people. She was a devout, ascetic, and of abundant virtue. When Imām al-Shāfiʿī arrived in Egypt, she did good to him, and sometimes Shāfiʿī led her in prayers in Ramaḍān.'[1] Al-Yāfiʿī says: 'It is narrated that when Imām Shāfiʿī came to Egypt, he called upon her and heard ḥadīth from her, and when he died, his funeral was carried to her and she prayed over him in her house.'[2] Ibn al-ʿImād says: 'Her connections: al-Shāfiʿī receiving ḥadīth from her and being carried to her house after [his] death are the greatest [signs] of her merits. This could not have been without her popularity, fame, honour and respect among the people.'[3]

In Egypt in the fourth century there was the mother of Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣadafī, Umm Ḥabīb Ṣafwah (d. 379). Al-Dhahabī says: 'She had a lot of ḥadīth. Her father was a *muḥaddith*, his son and her sisters also. She taught ḥadīth.[4]

But ḥadīth science was really activated among the women of Egypt when Fāṭimah bint Saʿd al-Khayr (d. 600) emigrated there. Al-Dhahabī says in his account of her: 'She married Ibn Najā al-Wāʿiẓ who brought her to Damascus, then settled with her in Egypt. The Egyptians learnt much from her.'[5] After Fāṭimah, there was Taqiyyah bint Abī l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Qurashī, (d. 606) who learned ḥadīth from her father and got *ijāzah* from a group of scholars including Abū l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Ṭufayl, al-ʿAllāmah Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥam-

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[1] IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa al-nihāyah*, *sub anno* 208. [2] AL-YĀFIʿĪ, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, ii. 43. [3] IBN AL-ʿIMĀD, *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, ii. 21. [4] IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah*, iv. 267. [5] AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 591–600), 469.

mad ibn Muḥammad al-Kātib al-Aṣbahānī, Muḥammad ibn Amīrkā ibn Abī l-Fatḥ al-Dimashqī, Abū Nizār Rabīʿah ibn al-Ḥasan al-Ḥaḍramī, Abū ʿAbdillāh ibn al-Bannāʾ al-Ṣūfī, ʿAlī ibn Abī l-Karam al-Khallāl ibn al-Bannāʾ al-Makkī and others.[1] In Alexandria there was Khadījah bint al-Ḥāfiẓ Abī Ṭāhir al-Silafī (d. 623) who studied with her father, and taught ḥadīth. Her students included Ḥāfiẓ Zakī al-Dīn al-Mundhirī.[2]

Ḥadīth scholarship among women in Egypt reached its zenith in the eighth–ninth centuries. In the eighth, there was the famous *muḥaddithah*, Wajīhah bint ʿAlī al-Anṣāriyyah (d. 732). She studied with Ibn Zuwayn, Ibn al-Naḥḥās, Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Qarāfī, ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn ʿAbd al-Bārī al-Ṣaʿīdī and Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Futūḥ ibn Khalaf al-Ṣūfī, and she got *ijāzah* from Yūsuf al-Sāwī, Ibn Rawāj, Yaʿqūb al-Hamdānī and others.[3] Another famous figure of Egypt in this period was the righteous shaykhah and holder of high *isnād*, Juwayriyah bint al-Imām Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Aḥmad al-Ḥakkārī (d. 783). She studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ḥijjār and Wazīrah; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* with Sharīf Mūsā ibn ʿAlī al-Mūsāwī, *Musnad* of al-Dārimī and *Musnad* of ʿAbd ibn Ḥunayd with Ḥasan ibn ʿUmar al-Kurdī, part of *Sunan* of al-Nasaʾī and *Musnad* of ʿAbd ibn Ḥumayd with ʿAlī ibn Naṣrullāh al-Ṣawwāf; *Kitāb al-Baʿth wa-l-nushūr* of Ibn Abī Dāwūd with ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Hārūn al-Thaʿlabī, the first part of *Hādīth Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah* of al-Thaqafī and a piece of *Mustakhraj* of al-Ismāʿīlī with ʿAlī ibn ʿĪsā ibn al-Qayyim, *al-Faraj baʿd al-shiddah* of Ibn Abī l-Dunyā with Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā ibn al-Ṭabbākh; second part of *Hādīth Ibn al-Sammāk* with Zaynab bint Shukr, *Ḥadīth al-Buḥayrī* and *al-Shāfiʿī* with Mīnāl al-Asrafī and *Juzʾ al-Ḥasan ibn ʿArafah* with Kamāl al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Shurayshī. Ibn al-Mihtār and others gave her *ijāzah*.[4]

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[1]IBN AL-ṢĀBŪNĪ, *Takmilah ikmāl al-ikmāl*, 52. [2]AL-MUNDHIRĪ, *al-Takmilah li wafayāt al-naqlah*, iii. 187. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, iv. 406. [4]TAQĪ AL-DĪN AL-FĀSĪ, *Dhayl al-taqyīd*, ii. 361–62.

Ḥāfiẓ Abū Zurʿah al-ʿIrāqī studied with her all the above-listed books,[1] which she taught many times.[2]

In the ninth century, there were many women teachers of Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar. Ḥāfiẓ al-Sakhāwī and Ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī had women teachers, among them Sārah bint Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 805), who taught many, including Ibn Ḥajar.[3] Among other *muḥaddithāt* there was Maryam bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Adhrāʾī (d. 805), the last student of al-Wānī and al-Dabūsī; Ibn Ḥajar studied a great number of books with her.[4] Sārah bint ʿUmar ibn Jamāʿh al-Kinānī (d. 855) narrated a lot of ḥadīth and great experts studied extensively with her. Al-Sakhāwī studied with her so many books and ḥadīths that he could not enumerate them all; he says: 'She was righteous, poor; that is why we helped her. She had intelligence, and accuracy in teaching ḥadīth, and patience for long sessions. With her death, people of Egypt fell one degree.'[5] Juwayriyah bint al-Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-ʿIrāqī (d. 863) studied ḥadīth with her father; heard the ḥadīth *al-Musalsal bi-l-awwaliyyah*, *Juzʾ al-Ghaḍāʾirī*, some parts of *Amālī* of Ibn al-Ḥusayn, part of *ʿUshariyyāt* of her father with Nūr al-Dīn al-Haythamī, and some parts of *Muʿjam al-Dabūsī* with Taqī al-Dīn ibn Jamāʿah. She got *ijāzah*s from a very large number of people.[6] Experts of ḥadīth including al-Sakhāwī studied with her.[7]

Spain and Morocco

Ḥadīth became popular in this part of the world in the second century, especially after the arrival of students of Imām Mālik, and then Baqī ibn Makhlad. Here too there were women who studied *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* with Abū Dharr. Among the most well-known traditionists of Spain was Umm al-Ḥassān bint Abī Liwāʾ

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[1]IBN AL-ʿIRĀQĪ, *al-Dhayl ʿalā l-ʿIbar*, ii. 513. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, i. 544. [3]IBN ḤAJAR, *Inbāʾ al-ghumr*, v. 102; AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 52. [4]IBN ḤAJAR, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, iv. 88. [5]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 52. [6]AL-NAJM IBN FAHD, *Muʿjam al-shuyūkh*, 401–02. [7]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 18.

Sulaymān ibn Aṣbagh al-Miknāsī from Cordoba, who narrated ḥadīth from Baqī ibn Makhlad, studied with him, accompanied him, and herself read to him *K. al-Dubūr*.[1]

Another early narrator was Aṣmāʾ bint Asad ibn al-Furāt, who studied with her father, a student of Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik ibn Anas. She was well known for the narration of ḥadīth and *fiqh* according to the *madhhab* of Abū Ḥanīfah. Her upbringing was exemplary: in the company of her father, she attended the assemblies of knowledge and participated in the questions and discussion.[2] Another famous *muḥaddithah* was Khadījah bint al-Imām Saḥnūn. She first received knowledge from her father and then went on to teach and give fatwas. Her father consulted her in important matters: when the post of judge was offered to him, he accepted it only after consulting her.[3]

Later on, after Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 462), *fiqh* became more dominant in Spain and North African countries. Later on, Ḥāfiẓ Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar al-Kattānī and ʿAbd al-Ḥayy al-Kattānī revived the science of ḥadīth there and then many women became eminent in that field.

The region of Khurasan and Transoxania

The science of ḥadīth first appeared in Khurasan and Transoxania in the second century, and became very strong in the third, the period of the authors of the Six Books and many others. The sources record the involvement of women of this region in ḥadīth scholarship from the end of the third century, then its growth through the fourth and fifth centuries until, in the field of ḥadīth studies, the women of this region leave the women of the rest of the Islamic world far behind. In the fifth century there were women of the calibre of Karīmah al-Marwaziyyah, famous teacher of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, and Bībā bint ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Harwiyyah. In the sixth, Fāṭimah al-Jūzdāniyyah was distinguished for her narration of *al-Muʿjam al-ṣaghīr* and *al-Muʿjam al-*

[1] IBN AL-ABBĀR, *Takmilah ṣilat al-ṣilah*, 401. [2] KAḤḤĀLAH, *Aʿlām al-nisāʾ*, i. 45. [3] *Ibid.*, 332.

kabīr of al-Ṭabarānī. Scholars travelled from every part of the Islamic world in order to study ḥadīth with her.

The fifth and sixth centuries are the peak of ḥadīth activity among the women of this region. When the Mongols destroyed its major cities, the ḥadīth scholarship in them was destroyed too, and has not yet returned to this region.

India

Ḥadīth scholarship entered Sind and the western part of India in the second century, but failed to penetrate inside mainland India until very late. Some efforts in the field were made in India in the ninth–tenth century when ḥadīth scholarship was already experiencing decline in most parts of the Islamic world. In this period in India the activity of scholars of ḥadīth was confined to reading and writing commentaries on some books until Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Dihlawī, better known as Shāh Walīullāh (d. 1176), breathed new spirit into the discipline as it was practised in India. Largely because of his efforts India became a centre for the revival of ḥadīth scholarship.

However, only a small number of women excelled in this field in India, most of them in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Important among them were women of the family of Shāh Walīullāh and those of the family of Aḥmad Sirhindī (d. 1034). Among others, there were: Shams al-Nisāʾ bint Amīr Ḥasan al-Sahsawānī (d. 1308)[1] and Ṣāliḥah bint ʿInāyat Rasūl al-Chirayyākotī (d. 1318), both of whom were taught major books of ḥadīth.[2]

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[1]See AL-ḤASANĪ, *Nuzhat al-khawāṭir*, viii. 185. [2]*Ibid.*, 195.

Chapter 10

Fiqh and *ʿamal*

In this last chapter I come to what the whole effort of ḥadīth activity is for. Much of what the *muḥaddithāt* were concerned with was the transmission of accurate texts through verified chains of narration. However, phrases like 'they taught ḥadīth' or 'they narrated ḥadīth' probably do not convey to a modern readership the whole of what they were engaged in, or its purpose. The bare fact is that – assuming motivation for the effort – even a non-Muslim could in theory be relied on to hold and transmit a bundle of texts accurately. Within functioning Islamic society, authority does not derive from that sort of academic integrity and competence alone. Rather, it derives from those qualities *combined with* piety and virtue in manners and conduct. The test and expression of the relevant qualities combined are *fiqh* and *ʿamal*.

Fiqh means understanding the legal import of the texts: how they inform rules and norms to guide the transactions that believers have with each other and their transactions (the kind of relationship they build) with God. By *ʿamal* (literally 'doing', 'practice') is meant implementation of what the texts preach. Strength in *fiqh* is not considered only in relation to expertise about individual texts or even individual chapters of *fiqh*, but to their connectedness and proportions, their harmony altogether. Weakness in this regard – we could call it narrowness in *fiqh* – can lead to distortions in *ʿamal*. So, for example, it may be that an individual, isolated from the collective knowledge of the community of scholars, learns the detail of obligations related to prayer and presence in the mosque. However, if he does not also know what is allowed or forbidden regarding transactions in the marketplace, and then rules that women must be dressed

and behave in such-and-such a way, without allowance for the difference in conditions between doing the prayer and doing business, between mosque and marketplace, he is likely to issue rulings that constrain women's doing business well, making it uncomfortable, eventually impossible, for them. For 'doing business' we might substitute 'seeking knowledge' or another activity that we know to be permitted or commended by the religion, and similar outcomes result. A rich, broad *fiqh* enables a rich, broad *ʿamal* so that individual and society live the largest area of their lives within the rule of their *islām*, their submission to God. The inverse is to inhabit a narrow core of behaviour ruled by Islam, while all the rest of life, piece by piece, is yielded up to (or seized by) the rule of non-Islam. This core can then harden into a token or symbol of identity, encouraging narrow sectarianism and destroying the plural solidarity of the *ummah*.

Fiqh and *ʿamal* are the twin pillars on which is founded the community's recognition of the greater authority, among the Companions, of ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd, Ubayy ibn Kaʿb, Muʿādh ibn Jabal, Zayd ibn Thābit, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās, and others. Similarly, the community did not bow to the authority, after them, of Saʿīd ibn al-Musayyab, ʿAlqamah, al-Aswad, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, Ibrāhīm al-Nakhaʿī, ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ, ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī, Ḥammād ibn Abī Sulaymān, Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Awzāʿī, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mālik, al-Qāḍī Abū Yūsuf, Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and others, except because of their excellence in combining scholarship with *fiqh* and *ʿamal*. Did such authority accrue only to men and did women have no part in it? The answer is No; and I have provided in the foregoing chapters several examples of women whose authority was respected by their male peers in the scholarly community. In this chapter, because the precedent of the Companions and their Successors is so decisive for Muslims, I have concentrated mainly on examples from that period.

THE *FIQH* OF THE WOMEN SCHOLARS

A more precise definition of *fiqh* is 'understanding the divine command by derivation from the Book of God and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*'. We must begin therefore with the women scholars' command of these primary sources of the *dīn*.

Understanding the Qurʾān

The best recitation of the Qurʾān is the kind that enables its meaning to enter the heart. Ibn Abī Mulaykah has narrated from Umm Salamah that she said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – recited the Qurʾān, pausing at the end of every verse. He would recite *al-ḥamdu li-l-lāhi rabbi l-ʿālamīn*, then he would pause and then he would recite *ar-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*, then he would pause and then he would recite, *māliki yawmi d-dīn*.'[1] All the major jurists in the history of Islam began their education by memorizing the Qurʾān, learning its different recitations, and gaining expertise in its interpretation. Women have also built this strong relationship with the Book, the fruit of which is that it is fully internalized, and they become fluent in it, speaking from it like a mother tongue.

In the later period, there was Fāṭimah bint Abī ʿAlī al-Daqqāq al-Naysābūriyyah (d. 480). Abū Saʿd al-Samʿānī said about her: 'She was the pride of the women of her time, no parallel of her has been seen for her character. She was a scholar of the Book of God and virtuous.'[2] Al-Ṣayrafīnī said: 'She knew the Book of God by heart, recited it day and night and knew its meaning.'[3] Sayyidah bint ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Ghirnāṭiyyah (d. 647),

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[1]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Sunan*, *Qirāʾah*, bāb *fātiḥat al-Kitāb*. [2]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*sub anno* 471–80), 269. [3]AL-ṢAYRAFĪNĪ, *al-Muntakhab min kitāb al-siyāq li al-taʾrīkh Naysābūr*, 459.

brought up in Murcia (Spain), excelled in Qurʾānic studies.[1] In the ninth century Bayram bint Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Dayrūṭiyyah mastered the seven recitations under the tuition of al-Shams ibn al-Ṣāʾigh, studying in the company of his daughter Fāṭimah. Then this Fāṭimah moved, along with her father, to Jerusalem, and practised reading of the Qurʾān with teachers there.[2] Fāṭimah bint Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Dayrūṭī (9th c.), also excelled in the seven recitations and memorized *al-Shāṭibiyyah*. She studied with several teachers before going on to teach the different recitations to both men and women.[3]

I turn now to examples of the women's understanding of the Qurʾan. ʿUrwah asked ʿĀʾishah about God's saying (in the verses beginning with *al-Nisāʾ*, 4. 3) *And if you fear that you will not deal fairly with the orphan girls [...]*:

ʿĀʾishah said: O nephew: An orphan girl would be under the care of a guardian with whom she shared property. Her guardian, attracted by her wealth and beauty, would intend to marry her without giving her a just dowry [i.e. the same dowry as any other person might give her]. So such guardians were forbidden to do that unless they did justice to their female wards and gave them the highest dowry their peers might get. They were commanded [by God] to marry women of their choice other than those orphan girls. [...] The people asked God's Messenger's for instructions after the revelation of this divine verse, whereupon God revealed [4. 127]: *They consult you concerning women [...]* [...] And the statement of God, *And yet whom you desire to marry*, as any of you refrains from marrying an orphan girl [under his guardianship] when she is lacking in property and beauty. [...] So they were forbidden to marry those orphan girls whose wealth and beauty they had a desire for unless with justice, and that was because they would refrain from marrying them if they were lacking in property and beauty.[4]

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[1]See *K. al-Dhayl wa-l-takmilah li-kitābi al-Mawṣūl wa-l-ṣilah* (*al-sifr al-thāmin*), 487. AL-DHAHABĪ says: 'She knew the whole Qurʾān by heart.' *Taʾrīkh al-Islam* (*sub anno* 641–650), 361. [2]AL-SAKHĀWĪ, *al-Ḍawʾ al-lāmiʿ*, xii. 15. [3]*Ibid.*, 106. [4]AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Sharikah*, bāb *sharikah al-yatīm wa ahl al-mīrāth*.

ʿĀʾishah's interpretation of these Qurʾānic verses became very popular among the jurists. The compilations of ḥadīth and books of *tafsīr* contain many other examples of her *tafsīr*. Suʿūd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Funaysān has put together a 500-page book of them, *Marwiyyat umm al-muʾminīn ʿĀʾishah fī l-tafsīr*,[1] culled from the books of the famous *mufassirūn* like Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Baghawī, Ibn al-Jawzī, al-Qurṭubi, al-Khāzin, Ibn Kathīr, al-Suyūṭī, al-Shawkānī.

The *tafsīr* of other women is also recorded or attested in the sources. For example, al-Tirmidhī has recorded the *tafsīr* of Umm Salamah.[2] Al-Subkī has reported about the mother of al-Shāfiʿī, whom he describes as devout, God-wary and among the most intelligent of people, that she and the mother of Bishr al-Mirrīsī were summoned to witness in a case before the judge in Makkah. The judge wanted to separate them in order to cross-examine them separately. The mother of al-Shāfiʿī said to him: 'You have no authority to do that as God says in the Qurʾan *if one of the two errs [in what she remembers], then one of the two may remind (tudhakkira) the other* [*al-Baqarah*, 2. 282].' The judge did not separate the two witnesses after that intervention although, technically, according to the doctrine of al-Shāfiʿī, it is allowable when necessary. Al-Subkī comments:

> This is good derivation, strong meaning, and fine argument. Though the known thing in the *madhhab* of her son is an absolute opinion (*iṭlaqu l-qawl*) that, if the judge has suspicions about the witnesses, it is better for him to separate them [in order to question and probe their testimony for collusion etc.]. Her word is clear in exempting the women on the basis of the proof that she mentioned and there is no harm in that.[3]

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[1]Saʿūd ibn ʿAbdillāh al-Funaysān, *Marwiyyāt umm al-muʾminīn ʿĀʾishah fī l-tafsīr* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Tawbah, 1413). [2]AL-TIRMIDHĪ, *Jāmiʿ*, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān*, bāb *min sūrat al-Baqarah*. [3]Tāj al-Dīn AL-SUBKĪ, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīyah al-kubrā*, ii. 179–80.

Understanding the ḥadīth

Women are also known for their understanding of the import of ḥadīths and competence in basing argument on them. Some examples of that have come earlier. Here, I mention the case of the maidservant Barīrah. She had been a slave of Banū Hilāl, till ʿĀʾishah emancipated her. The case contains many fine legal points; the ḥadīth could not have become, as it did, a text that the jurists depended upon if Barīrah and ʿĀʾishah had not been aware of those fine points and preserved and conveyed them accurately. The whole incident is dispersed by al-Bukhārī in different parts of his *Saḥīḥ* the better expose its relevance in different legal contexts. I summarize here from one occurrence of the Barīrah ḥadīth in the *Saḥīḥ*.

ʿĀʾishah narrated that Barīrah came to her for help in drawing up the *mukātabah* (the emancipation contract whereby slaves were enabled to buy their freedom over a period of time). ʿĀʾishah was willing to pay the whole sum, but required that Barīrah should then come into her care under the Arab system of *walāʾ*, which enabled an individual or clan to extend their family's protection to someone who had no tribal connections. Barīrah's owners refused this condition. They said to her: 'If [ʿĀʾishah] is seeking reward from God [for freeing a slave] she can do so, but your *walāʾ* will be ours.' ʿĀʾishah reported this to the Prophet who said: 'Buy and emancipate her, as the *walāʾ* is for the one who emancipates. Then [on an occasion after that] God's Messenger stood up and said: What about those who stipulate conditions that are not present in God's law? [No matter] who imposes conditions that are not present in God's law, those conditions will be invalid, even if he imposed them a hundred times. God's judgement is the truth and more solidly established [than any man-made custom or law].'[1]

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Mukātab*, bāb *istiʿānah al-mukātab wa suʾāli-hi al-nās.*

Women jurists

ʿĀʾishah was, among the Companions, men and women, a principal resource for juristic opinion. ʿAṭāʾ ibn Abī Rabāḥ said: "ʿĀʾishah was the most expert in jurisprudence among all the people.'[1] Masrūq said: 'I have seen the great jurists among the Companions of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – asking her about the law of inheritance.'[2] ʿUrwah said: 'I have never seen anyone more knowledgeable of the *fiqh* than ʿĀʾishah.'[3]

Among the Companions Umm Salamah is also considered to have been a jurist, and her opinions are well recorded in the books of ḥadīth and *fiqh*. Another Companion well-known for her knowledge and expertise in the *sunnah*s is al-Rubayyiʿ bint Muʿawwidh. Ibn ʿAbbās, in spite of his excellent knowledge of the Book of God and juristic aspects of law, consulted her.[4] So also did ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, famously on a judgement related to divorce law during the rule of ʿUthmān.[5]

There is also record of women publicly intervening in court judgements in the expectation of being able to prevent grave miscarriage of justice. Mālik narrates from Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd that he said: 'Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥazm [the qāḍī of Madinah] informed me that he was holding a Nabṭī who had stolen iron rings in prison [and intending] to cut off his hand. Then ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān sent to me her client called Umayyah. [...] She came to me while I was among the people and said: Your aunt ʿAmrah says: O nephew, are you holding a Nabṭī [in custody] for a minor thing that has been mentioned to me, and do you mean to cut off his hand? I said: Yes. She said: ʿAmrah says to you that there is no cutting off of the hand except for stealing something worth a quarter of a dinar or more than that. [...] Then I released the Nabṭī.'[6] This intervention by ʿAmrah happened at the time when the city was

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[1] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istiʿāb*, ii. 744; AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 185. [2] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istiʿāb* , ii. 744. [3] AL-MIZZĪ, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, xxxv. 234. [4] IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istiʿāb*, ii. 731. [5] *Ibid.* [6] MĀLIK, *al-Muwaṭṭā*, 437–38.

graced by the residence of the much renowned 'Seven Jurists of Madinah'.

It is a measure of how well respected knowledge was that even a well-informed slave could on occasion correct someone of established reputation. Al-Ashᶜab, a jurist of the school of Mālik, narrates that he was in Madinah, and he wanted to buy vegetables from a girl, and the people at that time would not sell their vegetables except for bread, for that is what they needed. He told her to wait till evening, then come and he would make the exchange then. She said: 'That is not permissible.' Ashᶜab asked why and she explained: 'Because it is selling of food for food [which must be done directly, hand over hand, whereas what you are proposing is] not hand over hand.'[1] When Ashᶜab asked about the girl, he discovered that she was a slave in the household of Imām Mālik.

This respect for knowledge whoever had it was not confined to the formative period of Islam. I have given several examples from later centuries of women whose jurisprudence was respected and admired by their male peers. One scholar particularly worth mentioning is Umm Zaynab Fāṭimah bint ᶜAbbās ibn ᶜAlī al-Fatḥ al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 714). She learnt *fiqh* with Shaykh Shams al-Dīn and other Maqdisī scholars.[2] Al-Dhahabī says: 'I visited her and I liked her character, humility and God-wariness. She knew *fiqh* well. Ibn Taymiyyah was amazed by her knowledge and intelligence and praised her fulsomely.'[3] Ibn Kathīr says: 'I heard Shaykh Taqī al-Dīn ibn Taymiyyah praising her a lot and lauding her virtue and knowledge. He stated that she knew most of *al-Mughnī* by heart. And [he] used to prepare for her many juristic issues [adequately suited to] her questions and her sharp understanding.'[4]

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[1] MASHHŪR, *Ināyat al-nisā'*, 122. [2] AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juz' al-mafqūd min Siyar aᶜlām al-nubalā'*, 416. [3] *Ibid.* [4] IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa al-nihāyah, sub anno* 714.

Women giving fatwas

Giving fatwas is conditional on having the appropriate degree of knowledge, not on gender. Imām Nawawī has stated explicitly that a woman can give fatwas.[1] Ibn Mufliḥ has also affirmed it;[2] so too has the greatest of Ibn Taymiyyah's disciples, Ibn al-Qayyim.[3] Ibn Ḥazm al-Ẓāhirī says: 'If a woman attains *fiqh* in the sciences of the religion it would be incumbent upon us to accept her warning. That actually happened. These are wives of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*, and his woman Companions. Religious rulings have been narrated from them and the proof is established by their transmission. There is no difference among our companions [i.e. fellow Ẓāhirī jurists] in this regard. Among them, other than the wives of the Prophet, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*, were: Umm Sulaym, Umm Ḥarām, and Umm ʿAṭiyyah.'[4] Ibn Ḥazm counted the Companions known for giving fatwas as 130. Of those, seven are known for giving a lot of fatwas; of those seven, one was ʿĀʾishah.

Maḥmūd ibn Labīd says: "ʿĀʾishah used to give fatwas in the time of ʿUmar and ʿUthmān until she died; [those] great Companions of the Prophet, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān, used to refer to her.'[5] The great jurists among the Successors used to attend on her to get her juristic opinions.[6] Abū Ḥanīfah narrated from Hammād, from Ibrāhīm, from al-Aswad ibn Yazīd, the great jurist of Iraq, that he asked *umm al-muʾminīn* ʿĀʾishah: 'What cuts the prayer? She said: Listen, O people of Iraq, you think that a donkey, a dog, a woman, and a cat [passing in front of the one praying] cuts the prayer. You have equated us women with them?! Push away [whoever is coming in font of you] as much as is possible for you. For nothing cuts the prayer.' Muḥammad al-Shaybānī says: 'We hold the opinion of ʿĀʾishah, and it is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah.'[7] Sometimes it is women who put to

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[1]AL-NAWAWĪ, *Rawḍat al-ṭālibīn*, xi. 109. [2]IBN AL-MUSLIḤ, *al-Mubdiʿ*, x. 25. [3]IBN QAYYIM AL-JAWZIYYAH, *Iʿlām al-muwaqqiʿīn*, iv. 169. [4]IBN ḤAZM, *al-Iḥkām fī -uṣūl al-aḥkām*, iii. 324. [5]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, ii. 375. [6]*Ibid.* [7]AL-SHAYBĀNĪ, *K. al-Āthār*, 38.

ʿĀʾishah issues that concerned them; here is an example from the domain of commerce:

ʿAbd al-Razzāq says: Maʿmar and [Sufyān] al-Thawrī narrated to us from Abū Isḥāq, who narrated from his wife saying that she called among a company of women on ʿĀʾishah. A woman said to her: O *umm al-muʾminin*, I had a slave girl, whom I sold to Zayd ibn Arqam for 800 with deferred payment of the price. Then I bought her from him for 600 and I paid those 600 on the spot and I wrote him 800 as debt. ʿĀʾishah said: By God, how evil is what you bought! How evil is what you bought! Tell Zayd ibn Arqam that he has invalidated his jihād with the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – except if he repents. [Then ʿĀʾishah explained the issue further; this kind of transaction is a trick to lend money for interest.][1]

Debate between men and women

That women can raise issues and discuss them with men should be beyond dispute. The wives of the Prophet sometimes did so; a sūrah of the Qurʾān was sent down concerning the discussion of a woman with him.

Once the caliph ʿUmar gave a speech asking the people not to inflate dowries, and told them to keep them small. An old woman stood up and said: 'God says in the Qurʾan [*al-Nisāʾ*, 4. 20]: *And if you mean to take a wife in place of another and you have given one of them a qintar [of gold] do not take a thing [back] from it.*' Possibly the woman had in mind that a large dowry might serve to deter a husband from divorcing a wife in order to take another, but at very least the verse clearly states the permissibility of a large dowry. The caliph responded: 'The woman is right and ʿUmar is wrong.'[2]

It is not always the case that the questioner is right, but the right of questioning is what is being illustrated here: ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd had said: 'The curse of God is on women who wear tattoos...' That came to the knowledge of a woman of Banū

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[1]ʿABD AL-RAZZĀQ, *al-Muṣannaf*, viii. 185. [2]IBN ḤAJAR, *Fatḥ al-bārī*, *Nikāḥ*.

Asad called Umm Yaʿqūb, who came to him to protest. He said: 'Why should I not curse one who has been cursed by the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – and who is mentioned in the Book of God? She said: I have read the whole Qurʾān and I did not find in it what you say. He said, if you have read it you must have found [it]. Did you not read in it [59. 7] *Whatever the Messenger gives you take it and whatever he forbids refrain from it.* She said: Yes. He said: The Messenger has forbidden it. She said: I think your wife does it. He said: Then go and look. She went and looked and she did not find what she was after. Then ʿAbdullāh ibn Masʿūd said: 'If she did that I would not live with her.'[1]

Reliance of the jurists on the fiqh of women

I illustrated earlier how the imāms among jurists relied on ḥadīths that are narrated exclusively by women. There are also examples of their relying on the *fiqh* of women. Examples can be found for most, if not all, the various 'chapters' or divisions of *fiqh*. Imām Mālik has referred in his *Muwaṭṭā* to the fatwas of the great *tābiʿiyyah*, ʿAmrah bint ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, on issues related to ḥajj. Abū Ḥanīfah relied on the saying of ʿĀʾishah (narrated from Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, from an old woman of al-ʿAtik) that: 'There is no harm in doing *ʿumrah* in any time of the year that you want except five days – the day of ʿArafah, the day of *nahr* and the [three] days of *tashrīq*.' Muḥammad al-Shaybānī, the disciple of Abū Ḥanīfah, confirms that as the opinion of his master and of their school, 'with one exception, that is, we say that [on the] evening of ʿArafah, as [also on] the morning of ʿArafah – there is no harm in doing *ʿumrah* at that time.'[2] Abū Ḥanīfah followed the ruling of ʿĀʾishah with regard to an issue in *ṭahārah*, namely when a bath becomes obligatory after sexual relations. He ruled, also according to ʿĀʾishah's practice,

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[1] AL-BUKHĀRĪ, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Tafsīr*, bāb *wa mā ātā-kum al-rasūl fa-khudhū-h*; MUSLIM, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Libās*, bāb *taḥrīm fiʿl al-wāṣilah*. [2] AL-SHAYBĀNĪ, *K. al-Āthār*, 84.

that if a woman leads other women in the *ṣalāh*, she should stand in the middle of the front row rather than out in front of the front row.[1] And, as a last example, he ruled in favour of the lawfulness of a father in need being provided from the earnings of his children on the basis of ʿĀʾishah's saying, which he narrated from Ḥammād from Ibrāhīm, that: 'The best that you eat is what comes out of your earning, and your descendants are your earning.' Muḥammad al-Shaybānī said: 'There is no harm for the father, if he is in need, to eat from the wealth of his son in the normal way (*maʿrūf*). But if he is rich and he took something from the wealth of his son, then it is a debt upon him. It is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah.'[2]

The women's holding opinions that others disputed

Ibn Kathīr said that ʿĀʾishah is distinguished for having noted and formed a judgement on a variety of issues (*masāʾil*) that are not found with any of the other Companions. Moreover, she had 'unique preferences' on some matters, that is, opinions in which she differed from others. There are reports (*akhbār*) about her opinions, and others' counter-opinions, which later imāms have collected.[3]

It is inevitable that when jurists do *ijtihād*, that is, exert conscience and reason to reach their judgement on a matter, sometimes their judgement is accepted by or conforms to the majority or consensus view, and sometimes is rejected by the majority and the consensus goes against it. All the great jurists, men as well as women, have held opinions that others disputed. Where the primary texts are not explicit and incontrovertible, it was their right to adhere to those opinions without pressure to conform.[4] The strongest evidence for the respect that was accorded to women's right to independent reasoning within the

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[1] AL-SHAYBĀNĪ, *K. al-Āthār*, 57. [2] *Ibid.*, 198. [3] IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa-l-nihāyah, sub anno* 58. [4] There is an extended discussion of this issue in Yahya MICHOT's annotated translation of the discourses of Ibn Taymiyyah on *Power and Religion* (Oxford: Interface Publications, forthcoming Nov. 2007).

same boundaries as men, is that they publicly held to, and continued to teach, opinions that had been publicly refused. I gave the detail of two examples of that in Chapter 1, where the isolated women holding their own were Fāṭimah bint Qays and ʿĀʾishah. Similarly, idiosyncratic expression of an individual's personal preference in minor details of practice was also quite acceptable: for example, the great Syrian *tābiʿiyyah* Umm al-Dardāʾ when sitting in the prayer used to adopt the posture usual for men rather than women.

ʿAMAL

One who has attained scholarly expertise in the knowledge of the rites but does not implement it, one who has accumulated vast knowledge of minor and major sins and does not use it to avoid those sins, or who knows the description of good deeds and good character but does not strive to adorn his life with those – all his knowledge has been useless and he is deluded in his religion and in himself. Imām Mālik said: 'Knowledge is not by abundance of narrations; rather, knowledge is a light that God puts in the heart.' Abū ʿĀṣim says: 'One who seeks the knowledge of ḥadīth, he is [seeking] the highest matters of the world, so he must be the best of all people.'[1] Fāṭimah bint al-Ḥusayn narrates from Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī that he said: 'The Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – said: God loves high and noble characters, and dislikes low characters.'[2] Ibrāhīm al-Ḥarbī said: 'Whenever one hears something of the manners of the Prophet – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – one should hold fast to it.'[3] Qāsim ibn Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAlī said: 'We were at the door of Bishr ibn al-Ḥārith, he came [out] to us. We said: O Abū Naṣr, narrate ḥadīth to us. He said: Do you pay the *zakāh* [that is due] on ḥadīth? I said to him: O Abū Naṣr, is

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[1]AL-KHAṬĪB AL-BAGHDĀDĪ, *al-Jāmiʿ li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa ādāb al-sāmiʿ*, i. 78. [2]*Ibid.*, 92. [3]*Ibid.*, 42.

there *zakāh* [that is due] on ḥadīth? He said: Yes. When you hear ḥadīth or remembrance of God you should apply it.'[1]

It would fill another book to relate all the ways in which the *muḥaddithāt* paid the *zakāh* on the knowledge they accrued and transmitted to others. In any case, the virtues – devotion in worship and continual remembrance of God; charity, whether giving of their time or their wealth; gentleness and kindness in their bearing, speech and manners; modesty and self-discipline in their dress and in their taking a share in the goods of this world; integrity and truthfulness in scholarship (meaning their recording and transmitting the knowledge that came to them from reliable sources, even if they did not like the doctrine or affiliation of those sources); humility and fear of God; love of the Prophet and his *Sunnah* in the full breadth of it; firmness, at times even implacability, in the face of speech or actions offensive to or corrosive of the *dīn*; and an enduring concern for the well-being of the *ummah* such that they were able to dedicate their lives to learning and teaching – can be illustrated just as well from the lives of the *muḥaddithūn* as of the *muḥaddithāt*. But we should acknowledge that for the latter the effort of will to take up and sustain such a life – absent the incentive of rewards in terms of employment or reputation in the world – had to be that much greater for women than men.

I here cite two incidents, side by side, that capture well the tone and temperament of Islamic teaching. Both demonstrate a strong consciousness of being seen by God, a powerful steadfastness, and a passion to improve human understanding and conduct.

Umm al-muʾminīn Ḥafṣah, the daughter of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, called on him in the final moments of his life. He had been stabbed by an assassin and there was no possibility of his recovering. During ʿUmar's rule, the Muslims had defeated two long-lasting and far-flung empires, secured the territories and established the major forms of the institutions that have ever

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[1] *Ibid.*, 143–44.

since defined the heartlands of Islam. His son, ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, was already present at his death-bed. Miqdām ibn Maʿdīkarib narrates:

When ʿUmar suffered [his wounds], Ḥafṣah called on him and said: O Companion of the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – O in-law of the Messenger of God, O Commander of the Believers... ʿUmar said to Ibn ʿUmar: ʿAbdullāh, help me to sit up, I cannot bear what I am hearing. So ʿAbdullāh raised him up, leaning [him] against his [own] chest. Then ʿUmar said to her: 'I am forbidding you, by the right that I have over you, from bemoaning me after this. As for your eye, I do not own it. For when a dead person is bemoaned for something that is not in him the angels hate him.[1]

The second incident concerns Umm Sulaym and is related from Anas ibn Mālik. The son of Umm Sulaym was ill. While her husband, Abū Ṭalḥah, had gone to the mosque, the boy passed away. Umm Sulaym made the preliminary arrangements for that and told her people not to inform Abū Ṭalḥah. When he returned home she set out his dinner in the normal way. He ate his dinner, then husband and wife had relations with each other. Then:

when it was the end of the night, she said: Abū Ṭalḥah, did you not see [how it was] with such-and-such family who borrowed something, then they kept it; when they were asked to return it, it was very hard on them. He said: They were not fair [in their attitude]. She said: Your son was a loan from God and He has taken him [back]. He uttered the supplication and praised God. In the morning, he came to the Messenger of God, *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam*. When he saw him, he said: May God bless the two of you in your night. Then she bore ʿAbdullāh ibn Abī Ṭalḥah.[2]

Umm Sulaym's teaching of how believers should manage grief may seem gentler than ʿUmar's. Indeed it is; she has the same wisdom and with it 'the woman's touch'. Yet ʿUmar's rebuke is not without tenderness, for he does not ask Ḥafṣah to

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[1]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, iii. 361. [2]IBN AL-ATHĪR, *Usd al-ghābah*, iii. 285–86.

control her tears. Rather, he was concerned – being well aware of the achievements of his reign – that no Muslim should build for him a mausoleum, neither in words nor in stones. The Taj Mahals of the Islamic world belong to a far different age, a different tone and temperament.

Some measured strictness, such as we hear in ʿUmar's voice – one marvels that he could find energy for it at that moment – is necessary to defend the *Sunnah* against corrosion. For Muslims, the *Sunnah* is to be defended against one's own family, even against one's own preferences. Ṣafiyyah bint Abī ʿUbayd al-Thaqafiyyah narrates that, some days after Abū Sufyān died, his daughter, *umm al-muʾminin* Umm Ḥabībah, called for perfume and applied it to her arms and cheeks. Then she said:

I was in no need to do this if I had not heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: It is not permitted for any woman who believes in God and the Last Day to be in mourning (*iḥdād*) more than three days for any deceased, except for a husband. For him she is to be in mourning four months and ten days.[1]

Sometimes the effort to correct is done by feeling or expressing aversion: ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUrwah ibn Zubayr narrates:

I said to my grandmother Asmāʾ [bint Abī Bakr]: How were the Companions of the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – when they heard the Qurʾan? She said: Their eyes shed tears, the hairs of their body stood on end, [just] as God has described them. I said: Here are some people when any of them hear the Qurʾan they fall unconscious. She said: I seek refuge in God from the outcast satan.[2]

Yazīd ibn al-Aṣamm relates that a relative of *umm al-muʾminin* Maymūnah called on her. She found on him the smell of drink. She said: 'If you do not go to the Muslims so they can flog you, then never call upon me.'[3]

Women in the formative period certainly did not lack courage to challenge and correct misbelief and misconduct. The

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[1]IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 100. [2]IBN ʿASĀKIR, *Taʾrīkh madinat Dimashq*, *Tarājim al-nisāʾ*, 20; see also IBN SAʿD, *al-Ṭabaqāt al-kubrā*, viii. 253. [3]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, ii. 244..

best of them were not waiting for others to establish the *dīn* for them but took that responsibility, as did the best of the men. Here are two examples of women 'speaking truth to power', albeit a power willing to be spoken to and told off:

Qatādah says:

ʿUmar came out from the mosque and with him was al-Jārūd al-ʿAbdī. There was a woman on the main road. ʿUmar greeted her. She answered [his greeting] and [then] said: Be off, O ʿUmar! I have seen you [when you were] called ʿUmayr [little ʿUmar] in the marketplace of ʿUkaz, tending the sheep with your stick. Then the days passed and you were called ʿUmar. Then the days passed and [now] you are called Commander of the Believers. So, be wary of God in respect of the subjects [whom you govern]. And she continued advising him. Then al-Jārūd said: Woman, you have said a lot to the Commander of the Believers. ʿUmar said: Let her be. Do you not know her? This is Khawlah bint Ḥakīm, the wife of ʿUbayd ibn al-Ṣāmit, whose word was heard by God from above the seven heavens.[1] So it is most fitting for ʿUmar to listen to her.'[2]

Zayd ibn Wāqid narrates from ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān about the counsel he was given, before he became caliph, by Barīrah, the slave emancipated by ʿĀʾishah:

I used to sit with [i.e. attend the class of] Barīrah before assuming the caliphate in Madinah. She said: ʿAbd al-Malik, I see in you some qualities, and you are worthy to assume this matter. Now if you do assume this matter, then avoid bloodshed. For I have heard the Messenger of God – *ṣalla l-lāhu ʿalay-hi wa sallam* – say: After having sighted the gate of Paradise the man will be pushed away from it on account of a little blood of a Muslim that he shed unlawfully.[3]

Not only in the formative period but throughout Islam's history, there have been great women teachers, famous for their preaching and their effort to deepen and reform the Muslims'

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[1]The caliph is here alluding to the sending down of the opening verses of *al-Mujādalah* (58. 1 *seq.*) when Khawlah brought her dispute with ʿUbayd ibn al-Ṣāmit before the Prophet. [2]IBN ʿABD AL-BARR, *al-Istīʿāb*, ii. 723. [3]*Ibid.*, 708.

understanding of the *dīn*. Some of them funded, some lived and taught in, *ribāṭ*s or retreats built for just this purpose. I close with a second mention of a famous reformer of the seventh–eighth century – not Ibn Taymiyyah, but one Ibn Taymiyyah revered and praised highly – great scholar, jurist, ascetic, leader of the women of her time and preacher: Umm Zaynab Fāṭimah bint ʿAbbās al-Baghdādiyyah (d. 714). Al-Dhahabī says:

A large number of women benefited from her and repented. She had abundance of knowledge, was content with little, keen to benefit people and give sermons with sincerity, God-wariness and for [the sake of] commanding the good. The women of Damascus [and] then [after her fame had spread, and she moved, to Cairo] the women of Egypt were reformed by her. She had a lot of popularity and influence over the hearts [of people].[1]

Ibn Kathīr says:

She was among the scholars and women of virtue. She commanded good and forbade evil, and opposed the Aḥmadiyyah sect for their [illicit] friendship with women and young boys. And she criticized their states (*aḥwāl*) and the thinking and arguments [*uṣūl*] of the people of *bidʿah* and others. In [all] that she did what men are unable to do.[2]

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[1]AL-DHAHABĪ, *Dhayl al-ʿIbar*, 80; AL-YĀFIʿĪ, *Mirʾāt al-jinān*, iv. 254. See also AL-DHAHABĪ, *al-Juzʾ al-mafqūd* in *Siyar aʿlām al-nubalāʾ*, 416. [2]IBN KATHĪR, *al-Bidāyah wa al-nihāyah*, *sub anno* 714.

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to Mohammad Akram's 40-volume biographical dictionary (in Arabic) of the Muslim women who studied and taught hadith. It demonstrates the central role women had in preserving the Prophet's teaching, which remains the master-guide to understanding the Qur'an as rules and norms for life. Within the bounds of modesty in dress and manners, women routinely attended and gave classes in the major mosques and madrasas, travelled intensively for 'the knowledge', transmitted and critiqued hadith, issued fatwas, etc. Some of the most renowned scholars among men have depended on, and praised, the scholarship of their women teachers. The women scholars enjoyed considerable public authority in society, not exceptionally, but as the norm. The huge body of information reviewed in *al-Muhaddithat* is essential to understanding the role of women in Islamic society, their past achievement and future potential. Hitherto it has been so dispersed as to be 'hidden'. Akram's dictionary will greatly facilitate further study, contextualization and analysis.

Mohammad Akram, currently a fellow of the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, is an alumnus of the prestigious Nadwatul Ulama, Lucknow. He has written many books on hadith, *fiqh*, Islamic biography, and Arabic grammar. This is his first major publication in English.



The cover shows the study journeys of Fatimah bint Sa`d al-Khayr, and of a few of her principal teachers and students. Her family moved from Valencia to the western edge of China; she died in Cairo in 600 AH. (Full map and details in ch. 3.)

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